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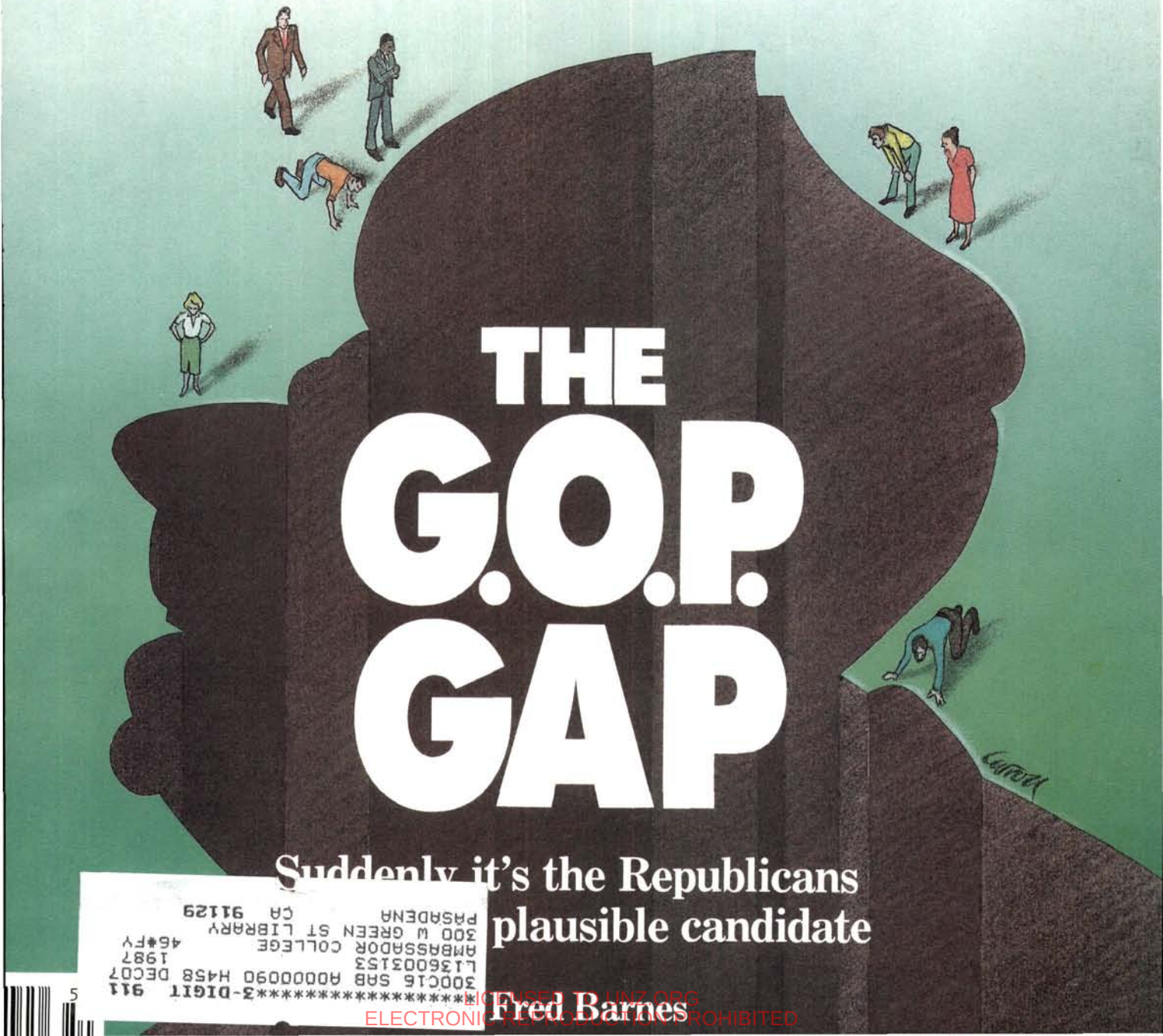

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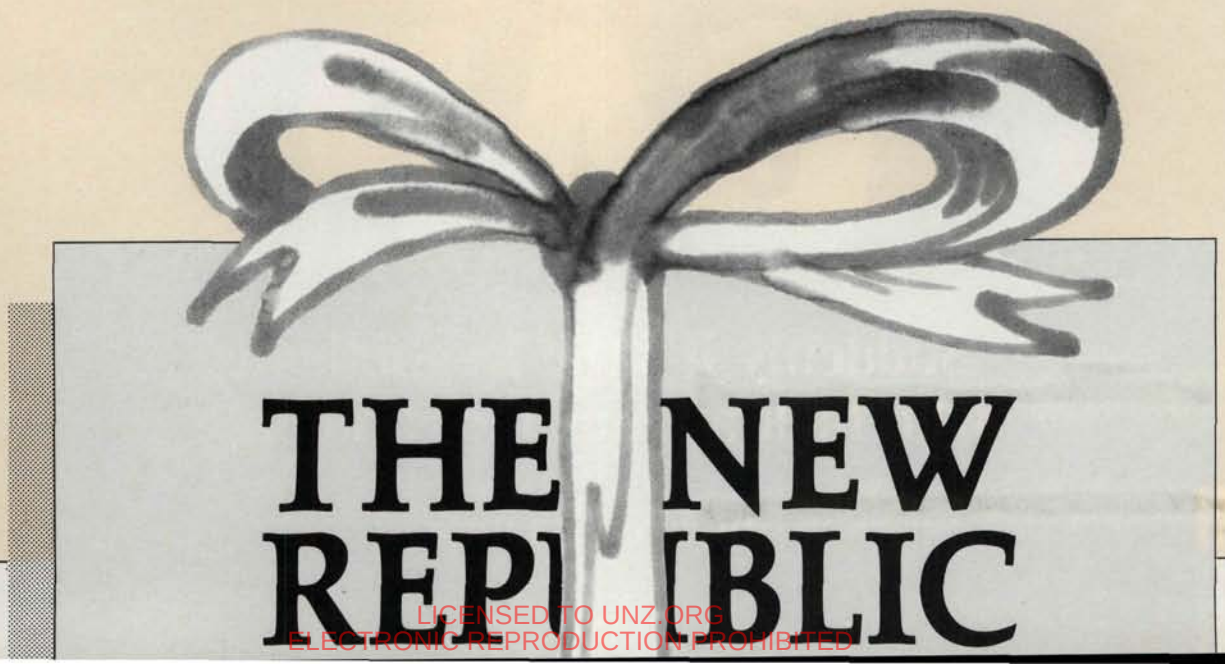

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FROM WASHINGTON

LOOSENING THE BONDS

Thus, a government bond is not capital, nor yet is it the representative of capital. The capital that was once received for it by the government has been consumed unproductively—blown away from the mouths of cannon, used up in war ships, expended in keeping men marching and drilling, killing and destroying. The bond . . . is simply a solemn declaration that the government will, some time or other, take by taxation from the then existing stock of the people, so much wealth, which it will turn over to the holder of the bond.

—Henry George, *Progress and Poverty* (1879)

Why is it that the bigger the national debt grows, the less Republicans seem concerned about it? Conservatives used to be obsessed with the federal deficit. Now they change the subject when you bring it up. ("Oh yeah? Well how about Carter and the killer rabbit?") The obvious explanation is craven hypocrisy: their man Reagan will have practically tripled the debt during his tenure. But the conspiratorial-minded might want to consider another explanation: the national debt is a transfer program from taxpayers to bondholders—that is, from labor to capital, from average people to wealthier-than-average people, from people in general to Republicans in particular.

They teach you in economics class that the national debt isn't worrisome like a personal debt because as a nation, "we owe it to ourselves." Of course increasingly we *don't* owe it to ourselves: we owe it to foreigners. But even the part owed to our fellow Americans isn't owed equally to everyone. Ownership of government bonds, like all wealth, is highly concentrated. More important, since the government borrows from the same credit pool as everyone else, the real effect of a rising national debt (in combination with tight money) is a higher price for capital, otherwise known as interest rates. When capital can claim more of the national output, labor must claim less.

That's exactly what's been happening. In the past eight years the share of personal income claimed by interest payments has jumped 40 percent (from ten percent to 14 percent). The share of investment profits in general, including dividends and rent, has risen 27 percent (from 12.9 percent to 16.8 percent). This doesn't even include the fantastic increases in stock and real estate values. The share of income that comes from wages and salary, meanwhile, has dropped by five percent (from 62 percent to 59 percent). Transfer payments such as Social Security are also up (from 13 percent of national income to 15 percent). In effect, wage earners are getting less so that rentiers and retirees can get more.

Of course the national debt is not the entire explanation. A battle of statistics has been going on about whether there is a "disappearing middle class" in the American economy. Some figures show that the average working wage hasn't risen for two decades, and that poverty and wealth are increasing while ordinary workaday prosperity becomes rarer. Skeptics demur. What we can say for sure, though, is that government policy has aggravated whatever change is taking place.

The burden of taxes has been shifted dramatically from capital to labor in recent years, a trend that tax reform only partially reverses. Since 1978 the tax rate on various forms of capital income has dropped dramatically, and the inheritance tax has been practically abolished. Meanwhile the share of national income taken by the Social Security (FICA) tax, which applies only to wages, has risen by more than a quarter. Including the employer FICA contribution, the lowest tax rate on wages, after tax reform is phased in, will be higher than the highest tax rate on capital. (And capital, unlike labor, can often accrue tax-free until it is cashed in or "realized.")

By 1991, if the Congressional Budget Office's optimistic predictions come true, the federal deficit will be $69 billion and annual interest payments will be $149 billion. In other words, taxpayers will be coughing up $80 billion more than it costs to run the government, just for debt service, and the debt will be

continued on page 41

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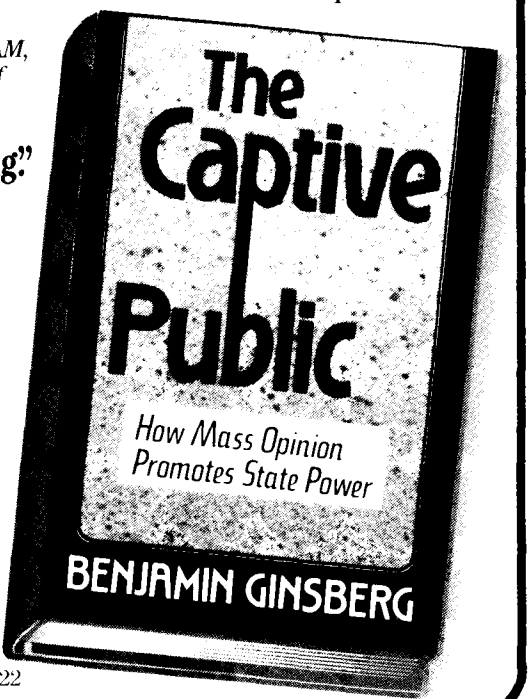

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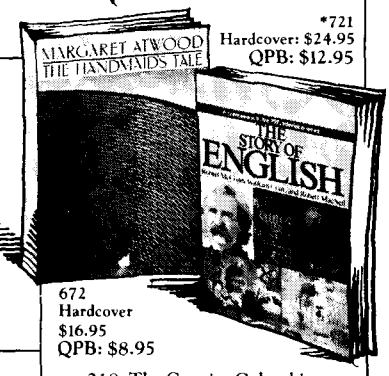

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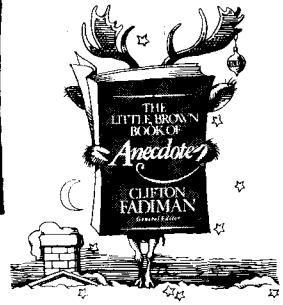

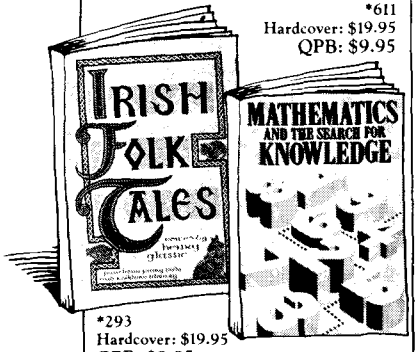

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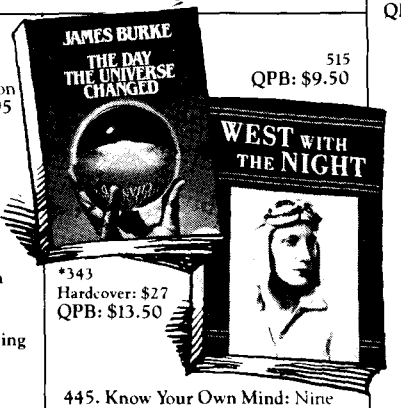

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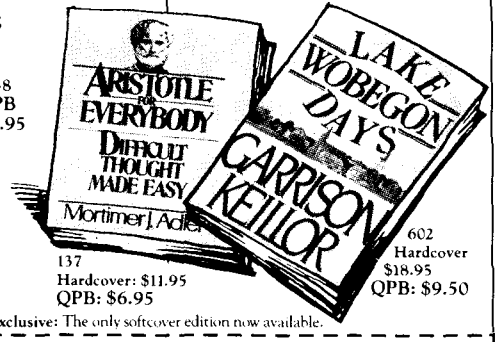

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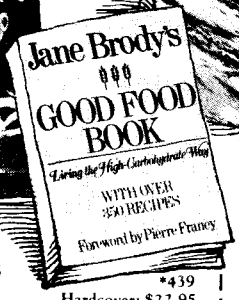

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CORRESPONDENCE

CLOSED DOOR DILEMMA

To the editors:
Most of the responses in "The Jeweler's Dilemma" (November 10) suffer from one logical flaw. The most important question to consider in determining whether to buzz in a young black man is not "What proportion of crimes is committed by young black men?" but "What proportion of young black men commits crimes?" Consider the following reasoning. White males have committed *every* presidential assassination in U.S. history. The Secret Service should therefore, in the interest of security, shield Ronald Reagan from all white males.

PAUL TANENBAUM
Bel Air, Maryland

To the editors:
Surely in this age of advanced technology, jewelers can do better than buzzers. A simpler solution, one that obviates the moral and legal dilemmas, is to install metal detectors along with the buzzers.

A. L. & C. X. PEARSON
Forestville, California

To the editors:
In college I took pride in my color-blind liberalism. My campus was safely tucked away in a New England suburb; the threat of urban crime was a distant echo. But living in a big city for ten years, I found it hard to remain a purist. Daily experiences have a way of destroying our ideologies; one experience with a black mugger can mushroom into a fear of all blacks.

I both criticize and empathize with the jewelers of Richard Cohen's column. Some may be jumping to wrong conclusions about their black customers, and that is indefensible if true. But I'll bet that most, like me, are simply scared. Fear may often be the first step toward racism. But can't it also be a straightforward result of self-preservation?

MARC KORNBLATT
Bloomington, Indiana

To the editors:
I am surprised that none of your contributors offered one logical and obvious solution: let everyone into the jewelry store without racial discrimination. Keep a gun behind the counter, and use it, again without racially discriminating, if anyone tries to hold the place up.

MARK K. BENENSON
Executive Secretary
National Foundation for Firearms Education
New York, New York

To the editors:
Juan Williams's claim ("Closed Doors," November 10) that "blacks still earn, on the average, about 56 cents for every dollar earned by whites" is grossly misleading. Young black men today earn an hourly wage that is 84 percent that of whites, and are even closer to parity when one controls for education. Black females earn virtually the same as white females. The 56 percent figure applies to *family* income, not individual earnings, and is attributable to the very high incidence of female-headed households in the black community. It is hard to believe the conventional wisdom on this subject, which blames the breakup of the black family on the economic problems of black males, since it has occurred in a period in which black males have made major gains relative to whites. Just what explains it, and what to do about it, alas, remain elusive.

STEPHAN THERNSTROM
Winthrop Professor of History
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

NORTH'S KOREA

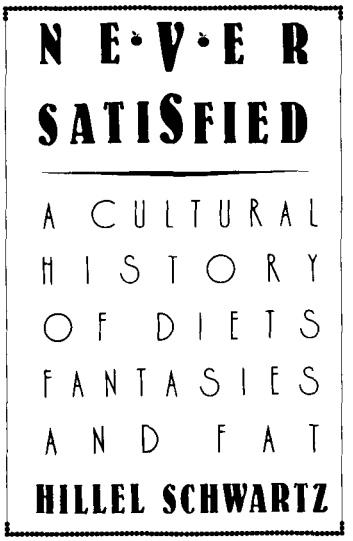
To the editors:
James North's article on Korea ("Korea's Conscience," November 3), which presents only the views of Kim Dae Jung, is woefully unbalanced. The tone is set by North's statement that Kim "has always advocated nonviolence and is very much a moderate." During the 1980 Kwangju incident, rioters plundered government arsenals and gave weapons to demonstrators, making it necessary to employ considerable force in putting it down.

Mr. North argues that Korea's economic "growth has partly derived from harshly regimenting working people and keeping their wages down." This ignores the intelligent economic policies pursued since the 1960s and a highly educated, diligent labor force. The IMF and the World Bank have consistently praised Korean economic policies. Korea's $47 billion foreign debt seems to worry

continued on page 41

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF A FAT-CONSCIOUS CULTURE.

Americans have been dieting as a form of redemption since the late 1800s, convincing themselves that a new and thinner body brings with it a new and better life. In *Never Satisfied*, Hillel Schwartz suggests that this obsession with dieting, slimness and fitness might be our way of coming to terms with the issue of abundancy in our society.



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THE NEW REPUBLIC
DECEMBER 15, 1986

THE FAMINE NEXT TIME

You will not be assaulted by television images of starving Ethiopian children this holiday season. Normal rainfall returned this year to that country's parched countryside. There is no immediate threat of another famine like the one that killed a million people in 1984 and 1985. Many Ethiopians still depend on internationally supplied relief food, but even these people have returned to their farms to begin planting again. U.S. officials now report that a normal harvest is expected, that the feeding camps are almost empty, and that private relief agencies will be able to pack up their emergency operations by the end of this year. These groups leave behind enough emergency food to meet the needs of two million people for a year.

It sounds like a success story. The West's billion-dollar humanitarian effort got to Ethiopia just in time, and was more than enough to tide the country over. But any celebration should be tempered by the knowledge that the famine was largely a deliberate creation: the Soviet-backed Marxist regime headed by Lt. Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam used hunger as a means of achieving its political and military aims. Mengistu is still pursuing policies that could cause starvation in the future. Now is the time to reflect on what happened and is happening in Ethiopia, and to think about how to respond when the next famine occurs, in Ethiopia or anywhere else.

Through taxes and below-market official prices, the Ethiopian regime effectively confiscated much of the grain and livestock that peasants in the drought-stricken regions had traditionally used to make it through lean years. These policies were designed partly to supply the regime's 300,000-man army (Africa's largest) and partly to keep potentially restive urban centers fed. But they served another strategic purpose too: to starve into submission ethnic minorities, which, chafing under the rule of the Amhara elite in Addis Ababa, supported rebel groups in provinces such as Tigray and Eritrea.

Beginning in early 1985 Mengistu used the famine as a pretext for moving 1.5 million people from the drought regions in the North to resettlement camps in the South. The ostensible justification was to give famine victims a new start in agriculture. The real reason was to depopulate rebel provinces. This forced resettlement campaign may have cost as many as 100,000 lives, according to the Cambridge-based human rights group Cultural Survival and the French aid group Doctors Without Borders. Instead of productive new farmland, resettled peasants found only squalid camps. This program earned comparisons with the "terror-famine" Stalin used to deal with his own "nationalities problem" in the Ukraine in the 1930s, and with the mass exodus from Phnom Penh ordered by Pol Pot in Cambodia. A wave of international protest made the government halt resettlement in December 1985—after 600,000 people had been packed off in trucks and Soviet cargo planes. But in his Revolutionary Day speech last September, Mengistu announced that "the resettlement program shall continue to be implemented stage by stage."

And Mengistu has another plan for lifting the Ethiopian peasantry out of backwardness: "villagization." During the last year, over 4.5 million people were moved from their traditional homes to government-selected collective sites. The plan is eventually to move 33 million people—three-quarters of the country's total population. Not even Mengistu claims this is necessitated by famine or drought. The peasants are self-sufficient. They work on fertile land in southeastern Ethiopia. The official justification is that the government will give the farmers better health and education services once they have been "congregated."

But the real purpose is to collectivize agriculture—to take direct, forcible control of the country's food supply. There is also a political rationale: to herd the peasants into sites where they can be subjected to official surveillance and indoctrination. Thus the government dries up the sea of support upon which the Oromo Liberation Front, yet another of Ethiopia's ethnic guerrilla groups, depends.

Earlier this year, Jason Clay, an anthropologist affiliated with Cultural Survival, interviewed dozens of the 30,000

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Ethiopian refugees who have fled to Somalia to escape forced villagization. Many of the peasants report that their herds, crops, and possessions were confiscated. In place of the food they used to grow, they were handed 500 grams of ground yellow corn per day. They were made to pack up their houses and carry them to the new sites. If they refused, their houses were burned down. Each new village has a militia made up of recruits from other villages; rape by these outsiders is common. Peasants told Clay that in some uprooted villages mosques were torn down; the building materials were later reused in the new villages, sometimes to build a local headquarters for the Ethiopian Workers' Party, or for the state-run peasant association—or to make latrines. Government cadres said socialism was the new religion.

Villagization sets the stage for yet more hunger. Will farmers who once freely produced more than enough for themselves now do the same for the state? No. Peasants will cut production, food supplies will fall, and the people will go hungry. The U.S. Agency for International Development estimates that the combination of rapidly rising population and Mengistu's collectivist fantasy will produce a built-in food shortfall of two million metric tons in Ethiopia by the end of this decade.

DURING THE FAMINE, Doctors Without Borders, Cultural Survival, and foreign journalists documented charges that the government had used the food available in feeding centers as a lure to collect hungry people for resettlement. Food was allowed to rot in ports because military trucks were busy at war. The government cynically profited by levying port taxes on shipments of relief grain. AID, one of the largest sources of food, insists, credibly, that it made sure there was no misuse of its supplies. But since Mengistu himself had created the famine, wasn't he in some sense being bailed out by a well-meaning West? Did private aid groups have a duty to stay despite the government's abuses? Or should they have condemned the government, risking expulsion in the hope of forcing change?

The immediate emergency has passed, but these agonizing questions have not been rendered academic. Some still insist that massive abuses never took place during the famine emergency. Yes, there were "mistakes and excesses" in resettlement, writes U.N. Undersecretary Maurice F. Strong in a recent letter to the *Washington Post*, but the program was based on sound logic and is still "needed." The U.N., he writes, is ready to help Ethiopia develop. So, too, are other governments and private organizations working in Ethiopia right now. Italy is sponsoring a $200 million program to help develop farming in the squalid resettlement zones. CARE International is attempting to do agricultural extension among recently "villagized" farmers.

What justification is there for attempting to work within the system established by Mengistu's callous uprooting of the peasantry? AID, for one, has concluded that it is impossible to do meaningful development work in a villagized Ethiopia. The World Bank won't lend for agricultural development because it's skeptical about the government's commitment to providing decent incentives. Indeed, many of Mengistu's own top officials, including the former head of the state famine relief agency and a foreign minister, have decided *they* can no longer work within the ruthless totalitarianism built by their former boss. They've defected to the West.

Humanitarian impulses are appropriate wherever people are afflicted by natural disaster. But relief and development work don't go on in a political vacuum. "Development" is incidental to the Ethiopian regime's purposes. That regime is perfectly prepared to see its people suffer when "necessary." It will not bend to persuasion or friendly advice, even from the most well-meaning of outside groups.

In one sense, the Ethiopian regime is only at the most monstrous end of a sorry spectrum that includes many other regimes in the Third World. Its savagely confiscatory agricultural policies necessitated a massive airlift of emergency food. In other countries the process is less dramatic, less a matter of ideology. Governments set up state buying monopolies to purchase the peasantry's crops at below cost. The goal is to keep food cheap for city-dwellers, who might rebel if they get too hungry; the result is poverty in the countryside and chronic food shortfalls that have to be met by imports. Increasingly, Western agencies such as the World Bank are conditioning financial assistance on changing such perverse structures.

Conditionality should also apply to the state-made crisis in Ethiopia. Relief agencies and governments should agree to work there—even during the next emergency, when it comes—only if the government first agrees to abandon policies that helped create the disaster in the first place, and that figure to create further disasters in the future. Is it cruel to deny help to peasants in distress? It's crueler still to ignore the true causes of their suffering. Meanwhile, the U.S. government should do everything it can to isolate and condemn the Mengistu regime.

Forceful pressure, not cooperation and persuasion, are the only terms Mengistus understand and respect. Anyone who doubts this should read the Ethiopian tyrant's Revolutionary Day speech. Having already subjected the poorest nation in the world to years of famine and war, Mengistu advised his people that "a new order" was under construction: henceforth, "ephemeral personal comfort should be forgone in the interest of lasting social progress."

THE NECESSARY MAN

President Reagan pushed the right man. Not only was he wise to get the resignation of his national security adviser, Admiral John Poindexter. He was even wiser to resist the advice of some of his closest friends that he save himself by destroying his best asset. Ronald Reagan's best friends wanted him—indeed, still want him—to fire

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Secretary of State George Shultz for disloyalty. He should not.

Not simply because Shultz is the wisest member of the foreign policy establishment in this administration. But also because on the Iran issue he was right from the start. When the president decided otherwise months ago, should Shultz not have resigned in protest? That is a question of individual conscience. Against the pressure of the Reaganite far-right and others, Shultz has advanced the country's interest on issues such as arms control and Central America. He is still needed. Honor does not require resignation every time you lose a battle on an important issue.

What about Shultz's performance afterward? He is being attacked for "distancing" himself from the president. We would think that the one man with the right to claim some distance is the one who so profoundly disagreed with the policy. But in fact, the real distancers here are those who dreamed it up. Bud McFarlane now says that arms shipments were a mistake. Donald Regan, blaming McFarlane, says, "If you give lousy advice, you get lousy results." Is calling his president's policy "lousy" not distancing? Moreover, Shultz's "distance" had a purpose. It persuaded Reagan to narrow his differences with Shultz's position and helped lead Reagan to announce an end to arms shipments to Iran.

Most important, however, is the question of Reagan's larger vision. We have serious differences with many as-

THE ZEITGEIST CHECKLIST

BY CHARLES PAUL FREUND

This Week		Last Week	Weeks on Chart
1.	**WHERE'S THE REST OF ME?**	2	3

Reagan. Efforts to curtail damage to Reagan via a press conference airing-out flopped. His answers about reporting to the Hill angered Congress, his denials (which he ate the same night) concerning "third-party" nations in the deal led to open speculation that he's uninformed or worse. Not only is his approval rating plummeting, but, the ultimate nadir, Jimmy Carter has enjoyed hours of network time lambasting him.

2.	**SIEGE OF STATE**	1	5

The deal. The deal aftermath has devolved into amazing public finger-pointing. George Shultz went quickly from hero (he disapproved of the disastrous policy) to bum (he was well-briefed on the deal all along, and will neither close ranks with the White House nor resign). Last week's game was guessing whose head would roll, and making nominations.

3.	**CAPITAL CRIMES**	4	2

Insider trading. The Boesky case has widened from a debate on arbitrageurs and efficiency to widespread indictments of Wall Street culture. The SEC has come under fire for allowing Boesky to sell to buyers who had no idea what was about to hit the fan. In fact, Wall Street bounced right back from its fall, providing evidence for any interpretation anyone could think of.

4.	**MANILA ENVELOPED**	*	3

Philippines. The Aquino-Enrile showdown, a relatively stark this-side v. that-side conflict, got the Philippines back on page one. More interesting is Aquino's gradual abandonment of the conciliatory "feminine" leadership style of which she was a rare example, and her adoption of the more familiar, muscled "political non-woman" approach of Gandhi, Meir, and other women heads of state.

5.	**PLAYING IT SAFE**	3	4

AIDS. An AIDS trilogy is coming to off-Broadway, safe sex techniques are featured on the local news, and the World Health Organization has called AIDS a pandemic. Meanwhile, more than a quarter of the U.S. populace fears the blood banks, nearly half wants everybody tested for AIDS, and over 60 percent admit to getting picky about sex partners.

6.	**WHERE THERE'S SMOKE**	5	3

Smoking . . . there's ire. Though numbers of participants seemed to drop, coverage of the tenth annual smoke-out day gave the anti-smoking movement growing stature. A decade ago smoke-out day was just another eccentricity. Meanwhile, New York state's new rules on where one may smoke, like the army's rules, continue the revolution in smoking in public.

7.	**VIDEO GAMES PEOPLE PLAY**	—	1

Psychotherapy. The U.S. psychotherapy explosion—so many people are seeking help, farmers included, that an insurance crisis has developed—is inspiring a wave of therapy TV shows. A half-dozen shows with names like "People in Crisis" and "The Group in Session" focus on real people and their emotional problems. Another, "Mr. Romance," is a TV lovelorn advice column. The pack's leader, of course, is "Ask Dr. Ruth," from grandma sex guru Westheimer, which will debut shortly throughout the country.

8.	**MAN AND WHIFF**	—	1

Pheromones. A landmark study establishing the existence in humans of pheromones has already received considerable attention in advance of publication. Pheromones, long known in animals, operate by scent; women's fertility, menstrual cycles, and menopauses are directly affected by them. The findings will certainly be applied (and misapplied) in a variety of political and social debates.

9.	**A BONE TO PICK**	—	1

Dinosaurs. The book on dinosaurs, long considered closed, has reopened with a vengeance. The mystery of their disappearance has been a renewed controversy for a while now. Thanks to that argument, their characters, their hot- and/or cold-bloodedness, and other matters are again under review. A whole library of books has appeared (and is being reviewed), and a pro-dinosaurs TV show is coming. Lost in the shuffle: the familiar brontosaurus, now seen as a classification error.

10.	**STUBBORN SPOTS**	—	1

Advertising. Concern that TV "time-shifting" via VCR would destroy the advertising environment may be unfounded. A recent study shows that people still recognize spots and their products even while fast-forwarding through them. What's more, one in five such zappers actually stops and watches certain favored commercials, especially the Miller Lite and Max Headroom Coke spots. Though a majority of zappers didn't recognize any spots, most viewers don't retain commercials even when they view them in "real" time, a phrase rapidly losing meaning.

*Item resurfaces in the Zeitgeist after at least one week's absence.

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pects of the president's foreign policy. Still, Reagan, not known for his factual grasp of the world, has often provided the right instincts on the overall direction of foreign policy. But he has needed to lean heavily on others to turn those good instincts into ideas and objectives. What has worked in our foreign policy can be largely attributed to Shultz. Shultz oversaw the facing down of European opposition in the Euromissile crisis; Shultz is the prime architect of the Reagan administration's support for "democratic revolution," as in the Philippines; Shultz had been building toward an alliance consensus on the single onging armed struggle in which the United States is engaged—the war with terrorists, now jeopardized by the Iran fiasco.

The way to save that policy is to jettison not the man who built it, but the amateurs who have undermined it and who have nothing but the vaguest good intentions to show for their efforts. The president was right to fire National Security Council chief Poindexter (unfortunately, McFarlane has no position from which he can be fired), not as punishment but as an announcement and as protection. It announced, even though the president could not bring himself to say the words, that his policy was wrong. And it protected the president because this is the purpose for which the policy resignation was invented—the resignee takes some of the ignominy with him.

The departure of Poindexter and his staff member Oliver North serves that purpose. The departure of George Shultz would not. Reagan is a president who can only succeed with good advice and good advisers. To sacrifice the best adviser would be the worst advice of all.

NOTEBOOK

□ SPIN OUT OF CONTROL:

Reagan Says Iran Won't Get More Arms

"President Reagan said today that he had 'absolutely no plans' to send more arms to Iran. . . ."

—*New York Times*, November 18

More U.S. Arms to Iran Possible

"President Ronald Reagan yesterday left the door open to future arms shipments to Iran. . . ."

—New York *Newsday*, same day

□ AUTRES TEMPS, AUTRES MORES: The chairman of the American Petroleum Institute, the big-oil lobby, has called for a government-guaranteed minimum oil price. My, my. Time was when the big oil companies thought that there was nothing worse than government price controls, and spent millions of propaganda dollars saying so. That, of course, was in the 1970s, when oil prices were going up and the question was a price *ceiling*. Things look very different to George Keller, also chairman of Chevron, now that prices are plunging. He wants an import fee to guarantee that domestic producers won't have to suffer the slings and arrows of that free market they touted so much back in the heyday of OPEC, when it didn't exist.

□ NEWS YOU CAN USE:

Mass Movement Incredible, Expert Says

Billions Of Birds Migrate

—*Hunterdon County* (N.J.) *Democrat*, October 18

(Thanks to Phillip B. Taft Jr., Pennington, New Jersey)

□ OVERBLOWN MYTHS DEPARTMENT: Bradford Reynolds, assistant attorney general for civil rights, has piped up again. Reynolds accuses elite law schools of propagating an "overblown myth" that courts should use the Constitution to engage in "liberal social reform." The only "overblown myth," of course, is the conservative paranoid delusion that law professors teach their students that the Constitution is a carte blanche for the liberal agenda. This latest outburst by the Reagan administration's most humorless right-wing zombie since the departure of James Watt might ordinarily be of little interest. In the course of his rantings, though, Reynolds made a revealing slip. He complained that liberals want to misuse the Constitution to thwart the death penalty. "Yet, they would freely permit a death sentence to be pronounced by way of abortion on the most innocent and fragile among us." What? Reynolds apparently believes that a fetus is a "person" under the Constitution. That would make abortion not merely a matter for states to decide democratically, as before *Roe v. Wade*, but actually unconstitutional. This certainly doesn't reflect the intent of the framers: abortion was widely legal at the time of the Bill of Rights. But then, as we never tire of pointing out, there are few principled believers in judicial restraint. "Liberal social reform," no; conservative social reform, fine.

□ THIS WINE IS ABSURD: The most amazing people are doing product endorsements these days. Nevertheless, we were impressed to read the following testimonial in an ad for Portuguese wines in the November 21 *New York Times*:

> *Luigi Pirandello, the great playwright, perhaps summed it up best when he quite simply said "Never have I drunk such flavorful wines as those of Portugal."*

□ AND SPEAKING OF PIRANDELLO:

Q. What about Poindexter?

MR. BUCHANAN: Poindexter is on background because that's the way the Admiral prefers to be.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I can go on the record, but I won't give you as much information if I go on the record. So it's

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your call. Do you want me to stay on background, or do you want me to go ON THE RECORD?

Q. On the record.

ADMIRAL POINDEXTER: All right, fine.

—White House briefing transcript, November 14

□ CULTURAL EVENTS: Edward Rothstein, TNR's music critic, has won the Deems Taylor Award of the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP) for music criticism appearing in these pages in 1985. Oxford University Press has just published *Discovering Modernism*, a study of T. S. Eliot and his times by Associate Editor Louis Menand.

THE MONEY CULTURE

APRÈS IVAN

SO CORPORATE AMERICA—the folks who helped bring you a record trade deficit—is ecstatic over the Boesky affair. "The fantasy of many businessmen right now is that Boesky implicates Milken and Perelman and Icahn and they all go to jail," said an anonymous vice chairman of a multinational manufacturer in the Midwest, quoted by the *New York Times*. The idea is that all of these parvenus, many of whom share a certain ethnic persuasion, will be thrown in jail, and this bothersome takeover business will be over. Or at least Congress will pass laws to stop takeovers in general.

Not so fast, guys. It's easy to understand why the heads of big corporations don't like people taking over their companies. Frequently it means early retirement and no more helicopters. But what about the rest of us? Boesky's sordid crime has reopened debate over the harm, or the value, of takeovers. Let's look at a recent case.

Goodyear, like most takeover candidates, is not a bad company. But the stock market, up until recently, was telling us that its prospects were shaky. Before the 1973 oil embargo, before radials, and before Japanese competition, the tire business was a fairly easy racket. But in recent years, Goodyear has had a hard time. Even the recovery of the auto industry hasn't helped much. Between 1983 and 1985 Goodyear's tire sales were up barely two percent and gross profits from tires were down 15 percent.

Still, thanks in part to heavy depreciation, Goodyear, like many other stagnant American manufacturing companies, was in the paradoxical position of being a cash cow—or at least a cash calf. Its cash flow between 1983 and 1985 was more than $2 billion. But, with competition so hot, it lacked the confidence to invest heavily in making tires.

If you were running Goodyear, a fairly typical industrial firm in a fix, what would you do? You could return the money to the shareholders, who could reinvest it in more productive sectors of the economy. But that would give Goodyear's management less dough to play with. So Goodyear's answer was to follow that famous maxim of corporate America (U.S. Steel, Dupont, etc.): "When in doubt, buy an oil company."

In 1983 Goodyear bought Celeron Oil and Gas, an exploration and production company, at the top of the market—a typical blunder for a big corporation. The blunder was compounded the next year, when Goodyear started building an $890 million oil pipeline from California to the Gulf Coast. (Goodyear's chairman called the construction of the pipeline an act of "visceral courage." It was visceral, all right.)

Remember that $2 billion in cash flow? Well, $1.2 billion of it went into the oil and gas business—and more is committed for the years ahead.

The stock market took a dim view of these goings-on. The bulls left Goodyear behind, and in early October the stock was trading at $32 a share, around where it had been three years before. Its price-to-earnings ratio, the best measure of its popularity with investors, was little more than half that of the average stock.

It would be good for the economy and society if Goodyear, with 130,000 employees, could become a more productive and competitive company. But how? One way would be for some government agency, or a council of economic wise men, to tell Goodyear what to do: sell its small aerospace division, close bias-ply plants, open radial plants, or whatever. This is the industrial-policy solution, and its limits are obvious. Government is no more likely to make the right choices for Goodyear than Goodyear's management. In fact, it's a lot less likely.

Another solution would be for Goodyear's shareholders to put pressure on management to change. The problem here—as Berle and Means pointed out 50 years ago—is that, in the modern corporation, management is insulated from ownership. The Goodyear board, even more than most others, is a captive of management. Of its 16 members, seven are corporate officers. Forget outside control, forget fresh air. The idea of the shareholders pressuring the board to change and the board pressuring management (or tossing management out) is ludicrous.

SO IF GOVERNMENT and shareholders can't reform corporations, who can? Corporate raiders. They aren't the perfect means. Some of them are unsavory characters, and all of them (and their investment banking skid-greasers) make far too much money. But they're the best industrial policy we've got.

Consider Sir James Goldsmith of London, Paris, and New York—owner of Grand Union supermarkets, Crown Zellerbach, the French newsweekly *L'Express*, and other odds and ends around the world. He saw Goodyear at $32 a share as an opportunity to make some money. Corporate raiders, in public, like to present themselves as crusaders

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for corporate democracy and a productive economy. Those noble ends are often achieved by their actions. But don't let raiders kid you: above all, they're out for themselves. A few months ago Goldsmith began buying Goodyear stock. He accumulated 12.5 million shares, and offered to buy the rest for $4.7 billion. What Sir James was saying in effect was: "I think that Goodyear is at least 50 percent more valuable than the market thinks it is—but only if I run it myself."

Specifically, he wanted Goodyear to get back into the business it knows best (tires), and out of a business it doesn't know at all (oil). And Goodyear would trim back its tire operations to make them more efficient. Corporate managers like running big companies, but bigness is part of what Goldsmith calls "the disease of corporatism."

FIRESTONE, the butt of the tire industry not many years ago, is a good role model. When a new CEO, John J. Nevin, took over in 1979, he decided that Firestone wouldn't diversify. Instead, he stuck to tires and he restructured the company, shutting down 11 of its 16 North American plants, finding special niches such as high-performance tires, and enlarging its booming auto-service business (which, coincidentally, sells a lot of tires). Firestone stock has risen by two-thirds in the past year. Nevin is a hero, and his stock trades at such a high multiple of earnings that it would be foolish for a raider to go after it.

But if ever a company needed a kick in the rear, it was Goodyear. Its most recent SEC filing shows that, of the company's top 31 officers, only two joined up after 1968 (and one of those was the chairman of Celeron). The average officer joined the company in 1956 and is 57 years old; only two are under 50.

The fellows who run Goodyear have been around long enough to know that they might have a hard time finding other work if Goldsmith took over. They were not enamored of the idea of letting the shareholders decide if they wanted to sell out for a nice profit. So, like others in the "corpocracy" (the phrase Deputy Treasury Secretary Richard Darman recently borrowed without crediting Naderite Mark Green), they tried to seize the high ground. This meant forgetting their usual objections to government interference. "It is not often you find businessmen asking for more regulation," said Edmund Pratt, the chairman of Pfizer. Hmmmmm.

Goodyear and its allies asked Congress to pass a law that would throw up barriers to takeovers—such as requiring an "economic impact statement," like an environmental impact statement, before an acquisition could take place, or forcing an investor holding a five percent stake in a company to keep his stock for at least a year before trying a takeover.

Goodyear's timing was exquisite. On November 14 Ivan Boesky was nailed for insider trading (not in Goodyear). Four days later, the House subcommittee on monopolies and commercial law held hearings on the Goodyear matter. Boesky's crime and the question of corporate mergers have nothing to do with each other. Boone Pickens was right when he said that using the Boesky affair as a reason to stop takeovers is like using the arrest of a bank robber as a reason to shut down the banks. You would think that Goodyear's shareholders would be the best judges of the value of Goldsmith's bid. But Congress felt it had to get into the act.

At the hearings, Robert Mercer, the chairman of Goodyear, argued that takeover activity "is sapping more and more of America's industrial strength." Goodyear and other targets have to "focus on short-term objectives," cutting research and capital spending to get their profits up quickly, jeopardizing their long-term health.

This is a good time to address the contention of Mercer and other critics of takeovers that, somehow, the stock market values certain well-run companies irrationally, pricing them too low and leaving them open to takeover bids. An article in the current issue of *Regulation* magazine convincingly addresses this question. It found that the contention of critics like Mercer is, in short, baloney.

The authors—John Pound and Gregg Jarrell of the SEC and Kenneth Lehn of Washington University—reported, for example, that takeover targets do not spend more on research and development than the average company and do not have lower debt (in fact, their debt ratios are higher than the control group). "This should not be terribly surprising," say the authors. Of course not. Investors aren't stupid. If a company is spending a lot on intelligent research and depressing its short-term earnings as a result, investors know it. They buy the stock for its future prospects.

Goodyear's stock wasn't depressed because of heavy R&D expenditures or low debt, but because the market lacked confidence in its management. Goldsmith told the subcommittee that the company had "strayed into industries about which it knew nothing, jeopardizing the very heart of Goodyear's business and the security of all those associated with it," and that it had "squander[ed] hundreds of millions of shareholders' money." Goldsmith overstated his case. Goodyear is not really a disaster—which is why Sir Jimmy wanted to buy it. But it could be run better, and he was willing to put up nearly $5 billion to prove it. If he was wrong, he could lose billions. The management of Goodyear has been wrong (or close to it) for a long time, and has paid nothing.

UNFORTUNATELY, mostly as a result of the uncertainty generated by the Boesky affair and by some stupid protectionist legislation in Goodyear's home state of Ohio, we'll never find out what kind of job Sir James would have done. Two days after the hearings, Goldsmith dropped his bid and cashed in his chips for a $93 million profit. Goodyear, in effect, bribed him to take a walk. Management dipped into the corporate treasury to save its own hide. But the company also, as the *Wall Street Journal* put it, "largely agreed to carry out Sir James's ideas for the company's future." It will focus again on tires, and it will sell off businesses in which it

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isn't expert—presumably oil and aerospace.

Some would call Goldsmith's $93 million profit on the Goodyear deal "greenmail." I'd call it a very generous consulting fee. (Goldsmith, by the way, was reportedly embarrassed to take such a big profit; my suggestion is that worthy charities call him and suggest ways to relieve him of his embarrassment.) He frightened a flabby, self-satisfied company into promising that it would reform. Is Goodyear really chastened? We'll see. Is this the best way to solve America's industrial problems? Yes. It's messy—and it sometimes results in unconscionable payoffs—but it's not a bad system.

As for Congress, it would be better off resisting the temptation to do something about takeovers and concentrate on ameliorating some of the pain that employees suffer when plants are closed and assets are sold off. That pain shouldn't be allowed to stop takeovers and restructurings, which, on the whole, are good for the economy and the society. But it cries for attention, and it should. That pain is the real thing—much worse than the pain of managers losing their perks, or their pride.

JAMES K. GLASSMAN

POSTCARD ETHIOPIA

WORSE THAN HUNGER

Addis Ababa

Imagine a land of mud, potholes, and bushes. Imagine a camp with thousands of tents pitched haphazardly amid excrement. Imagine a terrible tenacious stench that grabs you by the throat when the wind blows. Imagine the roaming men and the anemic women, bent over their sticks. Imagine the children, faces covered with flies, playing in the muck. And, above all, imagine that a makeshift life is organizing itself here—shops, police, militiamen, restaurants built above latrines, and a thousand and one deals that keep the camp's economy going.

They are not here because of the famine, or because of the drought. And none of those 20 or so people I interviewed told me they'd left their land because it no longer could feed them. If they are here, if they have risked the police, the borders, the dangers, if they've taken the chance to come and stagnate in this pestilence, it is because they are fleeing from a threat more terrible than the famine: the Ethiopian government's program of "villagization."

What precisely is this "villagization"? The accounts I heard were in close enough agreement to allow me to draw at least tentative conclusions. In general, it starts with the arrival of the government militiamen in the center of an agricultural zone. They round up the population. They arrest its traditional chiefs. They proceed with the compulsory registering of property, cattle, and tools. After that they force the peasants to dismantle their houses and carry them on their backs to a new site selected by the Party, where they set them up again.

One of the people I interviewed said that he was beaten up when he refused to comply. Another told me that he was thrown in jail for attempting to sell a donkey and a cart after they'd been registered. A third said he'd seen a soldier cut off the ears and noses of a group of shepherds who refused to divulge the location of their secret grazing grounds.

I learned nothing new about villagization during the two days I was in Addis Ababa on behalf of Action Internationale Contre le Faim. I got the feeling that it was taboo, a subject that people discussed only with reluctance. So it was a relief to drive north toward the city of Dese in an ACIF truck with a good interpreter. At the end of a dirt road, in the midst of a magnificent but oddly forsaken landscape, we at last found what we came looking for: 200 or 300 huts made of tree limbs, thatch, and mud standing erect in the flat country, equidistant and identical to the point of hallucination. It was a dead city, with its too rigorous lineup, its perfect cleanliness, its silent children, and a group of men in tatters who refused to speak.

On the way back we caught sight of a lone, deserted house, and we stopped for a moment. Terror hit the people inside. Their refusal to engage in any discussion bordered on hatred. Our interpreter discovered that we had found the only peasants who had escaped the round-up. They thought we were Soviets come to correct the error.

ON ANOTHER TRIP out of Addis we sped west on the road to Harer, and for the first time began to get an idea of "deep Ethiopia." On both sides of the road was rich meadowland with a thousand shades of green scaling the mountain as far as the eye could see. All this had been ravaged by the villagization. When their mosques were destroyed so that the material could be used to build latrines, half of the active population fled toward Somalia. All the cattle ranchers, upon hearing about collectivization, sold their livestock on the cheap. Next year there will be another famine in the province of Harer. We will again see live on our screens terrible images of skeletal bodies, of swollen bellies, of death. Only it is the Ethiopian government that will have deliberately created the situation. And it will be the humanitarian organizations of the West that again will organize emergency assistance. The Americans are already here. They have their stocks, their warehouses, their distribution networks all ready to go.

In Harer I met Muftah S., a shopkeeper by trade, who supplements his monthly earnings by "passing" refugees south of Jigiga toward Somalia. "The passage takes 48 hours," he explained. "It could go faster, of course. But one can only walk at night. And by 5 or 6 o'clock in the morning, one must hide behind the brambles. The first 30 kilometers are all right. After that it gets worse. The Cuban barracks are more numerous and the Ethiopian militia

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more alert. Sometimes they let you through. They ask for a little money, impound the jewelry, but finally they let you through. Sometimes it turns sour. And the other day, for example, 20 of us left. We picked up six more on the way. When we made it to our destination, Tug Wajale, there were only eight of us left. . . ."

RETURN TO ADDIS. Ahmed B. told me to meet him at the gates of the gigantic Saint Michael's Church, one of the largest in all Africa. About 20 years old, he is one of some 2,000 students the Party sent in 1984 to the new settlement areas in the South. He told me he saw the Soviet-made Antonov planes stripped of their bomb bays and filled in every nook and cranny with humanity. He saw the corpses of those who hadn't made the trip. He saw pregnant women who had delivered on the way. He saw, when the trucks unloaded their cargo and some, terror-stricken, attempted to flee, the militiamen catching up with them and breaking either a leg or an arm. He saw mothers separated from their children, brothers, or sisters, the husbands from their wives. He saw transit camps with appalling hygienic conditions, but where there was still room for "political formulation."

"Eh, listen," said Ahmed Ali, the bureaucrat very officially in charge of selecting aid projects for the refugee commission. "I don't take anything less than a million dollars . . . One has to be serious, you understand . . . One has to think big . . . But I'll keep your proposal in mind . . . Your candidacy is a serious one . . . And France, of course . . . Yes, we like France here . . . So I promise you . . . ," etc.

Perhaps I'm making him into a caricature. But in the end, the tone is about right. He had the breathtaking nerve of someone who has understood the mechanics of Western humanitarian aid. Are the humanitarian projects in Ethiopia on the verge of becoming "markets"? Are we at the point where we'll have to beg from the hangmen the right to come to the help of the victims?

Asmara. The capital of the Northern province of Eritrea. In fact there are two Asmaras. There is Asmara the radiant town of smuggled cognacs, of flowers, of nostalgia. Between a bougainvillea and a sumptuous climbing ivy appears an Apollo of Belvedere. And then there's the Asmara besieged with fortified terraces and sandbags in steeples. When evening comes, the children drift into the Hotel Nila and the Peacock Bar, to tell horrific stories of a war one never imagined. The two faces of Asmara have the same apocalyptic merriment, the same slightly feverish euphoria of a town living on borrowed time.

We took the one road open to military convoys and humanitarian aid missions, which goes deep into Eritrea. The war is very close by. There was a burned-out tank on the roadside, a bridge with its arch half destroyed, a church turned into a barrack. In principle, the road is maintained by government agents. But these mountains, these lava fields, these monstrous fallen rocks are the realm of the "fighters," the Tigray rebels battling the Ethiopian government. This is the area where the Mengistu government worked hardest at starving people.

At Ramah, on the provincial border between Eritrea and Tigray, ACIF has set up a mission. The ACIF volunteers help their population settle down rather than displacing them. They work with the traditional villages rather than trying their hand at collectivization. Mostly they work on both sides and don't ask a child before inoculating or feeding him whether he's for or against the Tigray guerrillas. For these reasons, their presence seems a happy one. I went back to Paris ready, not only to defend the mission, but to cite it as an example. The worst is not inevitable. Maybe it's possible to checkmate blackmail.

BERNARD-HENRI LEVY

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Why the Iranians wanted to deal.

MY FRIEND SATAN

IN THE BLAZING controversy over secret U.S.-Iran contacts, one critical fact was largely ignored. Iran is facing an agonizing political reappraisal. Many of its leaders realize they cannot win the war with Iraq, spread Islamic revolution, or easily escape the dangers stemming from Iran's international isolation. The battle to succeed the Ayatollah Khomeini is producing bitter infighting that can only get worse. For six years Tehran had refused to talk. Now pressures stemming from the Iran-Iraq war and a largely successful U.S. policy of isolating Islamic Iran have laid the basis for important new diplomatic initiatives.

Consider Iran's conduct of the 1980-81 hostage crisis. Khomeini's regime used the conflict to radicalize the revolution, mobilize followers, eliminate rivals, and break with the United States to prevent Washington from helping its moderate opposition. Iran's criminal behavior had no immediate costs: Tehran had enough oil income to sustain its economy and did not need the arms embargoed in retaliation by the West. Isolation helped consolidate the revolution. By late 1980, however, the regime that had consolidated power over the country and the politicians who controlled the regime wanted order. The crisis became dangerous when Iraq's invasion made Iran desperate for the arms, money, and international support it had previously denounced.

The regime's behavior was shaped both by fanaticism, which put ideological consistency first, and by radical pragmatism. The latter approach is typical of "modern dictatorships," where populist tyrannies hold power by building a mass base of support and a strong institutional

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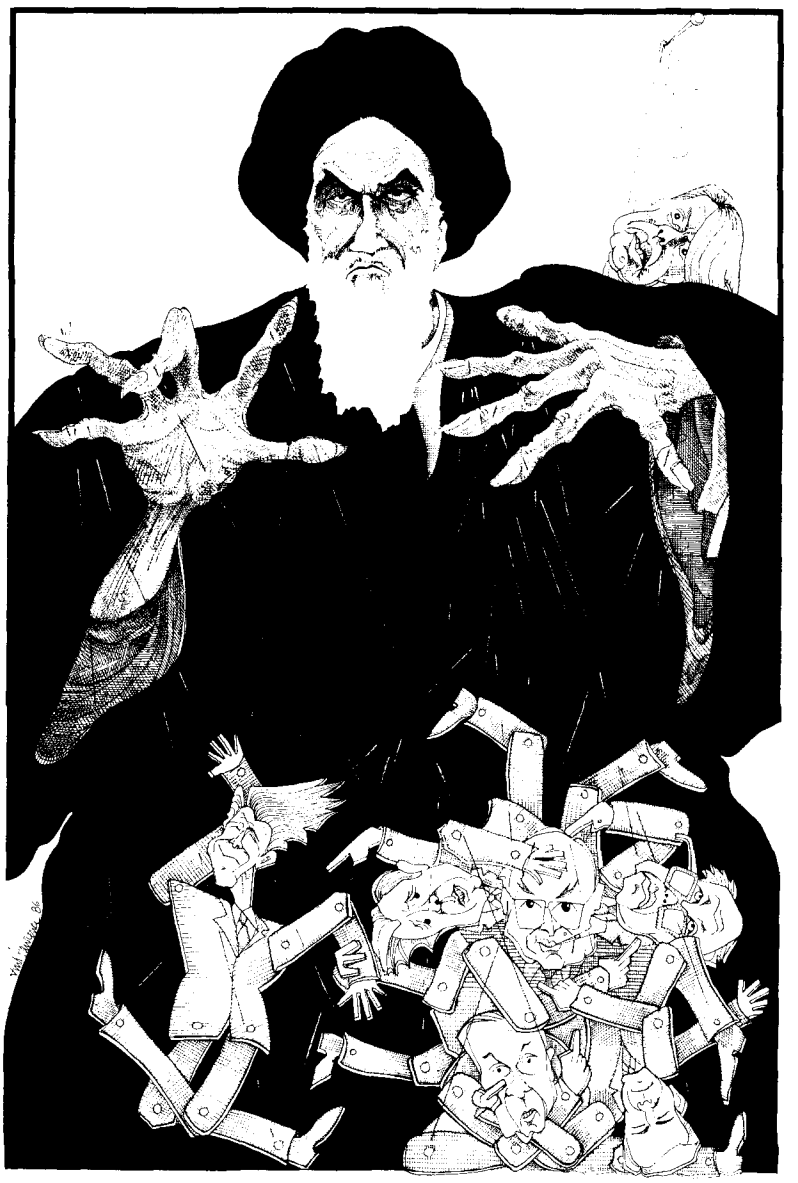
infrastructure. In Iran, leaders had to hold Khomeini's favor by ideological steadfastness. They courted party, clerical, and military interest groups with material benefits, and kept a section of the general public loyal with both bread and slogans. A fanatical Iranian policy would have held on to its demands and the hostages. Instead, in early 1981, Tehran adjusted to reality by making a deal with the United States on concessionary terms. Khomeini accepted this bargain but insisted Iran could have no détente with America and no peace without total victory over Iraq.

Today, the Islamic regime is having trouble maintaining these two principles. About 18 months ago, when Iran was making its first secret overtures to the United States, riots broke out in south Tehran neighborhoods that had always been the strongest supporters of the regime. The war had changed from a domestic political asset into a liability. Tehran's strategies for winning the war (a military offensive breaking through Iraqi lines; a collapse of the hard-pressed Iraqi army or economy) failed. Iran won local battles—which help sustain domestic support for the war—but no decisive one. Iraq has strong defensive positions, imports all the modern arms it wants, and receives large loans from many countries, including the United States. Iraqi planes have been making devastating attacks on Iranian cities and oil facilities.



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The war is not about to end, because Khomeini won't allow any compromise. The contenders for power know he could destroy any of them with a single word if he deems them too soft on America or Iraq. His would-be heirs must continue the war but prefer to keep it at a low level that can be sustained for several years. They expect that Khomeini's passing from the scene will eventually make possible a negotiated settlement.

None of Iran's leaders is really moderate. Personal ambitions, not ideology or issues, divide these factions: President Ali Khamenehi and Prime Minister Mir Hussein Mousavi dominate the government apparatus. They are slightly to the left of their rivals on economic issues, favoring nationalization of land and commerce. Speaker of the Parliament Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani has support in the Islamic Republican Party and among bazaar merchants. He has made some public criticisms of the war. Ayatollah Hussein Ali Montazeri, Khomeini's designated successor, has the fewest committed supporters, but Khomeini's seal of approval is a tremendous asset. Montazeri himself is softer on the war than Khomeini and more pro-capitalist than Khamenehi. His faction includes both hard-liners and centrists.

The Khamenehi and Rafsanjani factions worked together to weaken Montazeri and deal with the United States in order to strengthen their hand. Though unable to turn Khomeini against Montazeri, they have struck at Montazeri's backers with the hope of reducing him to a figurehead in the post-Khomeini era. The arrest of Mehdi Hashemi was an important part of this campaign. Hashemi, born in Montazeri's hometown and a close friend of his late son, demanded the regime spread Islamic revolution and support terrorism as a top priority. His circle accused Khamenehi of seeking a "stable state" at the expense of principle.

After having so many of its own planes hijacked by dissidents, Iran adopted a critical stance toward hijacking and played the main role in releasing U.S. hostages held in the seizure of a TWA plane last year. The move against Hashemi was another signal to the United States that Khamenehi and Rafsanjani might be willing to trim expansionist, subversive policies in order to ensure their control of a radical dictatorial regime at home. In revenge, Hashemi's friends leaked news of the secret Washington-Tehran con-

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tacts to disrupt them and discredit Khamenehi's government. Syria, fearing a U.S.-Iran rapprochement, helped them. Hashemi's group hoped that Khomeini would be shocked and would take action against those involved in the negotiations. Insulated from the day-to-day problems and tough choices facing the politicians, Khomeini remains a pure ideologue. He would not have countenanced contacts between Tehran and the Great Satan. But Rafsanjani and Khamenehi would not have risked action unless they thought him too ill or tired to discover their activities. In the aftermath of the revelations they managed to convince him that their story ridiculing the contacts was accurate.

When Khomeini dies, his heirs will compete in claiming to be faithful followers of his policies. As someone finally consolidates authority, however, he will have to cope with practical problems. The fact that two factions supported contacts with America show how attractive this factor could be as part of their solution. One of the most important messages emerging from the secret talks is the implication that Khomeini has failed in his ambition to transform Iran's political culture.

HISTORICALLY, Turks and Afghans fought foreign invaders and influence; Iranians accommodated them. During the hostage crisis, cables from the U.S. Embassy in Iran from 1952-53 were released to the U.S. National Archives, and I saw them before they were withdrawn. Their greatest secret was the account of how dozens of Iranian leaders, after publicly pledging loyalty to Mohammed Mossadegh's nationalist government, then snuck out to the U.S. Embassy to ask the Americans to put them into power.

I once gave an impassioned lecture urging Iranians to stop crediting or blaming the British and Americans for everything that happened in the country. Afterward, a member of the audience came up and said he agreed with me: "It was the French!" A U.S. diplomat, after his release from captivity, told me he attributed the 1979 embassy takeover to the regime's horror at the daily sight of a long line of Iranians, including politicians and military officers, waiting outside to apply for visas or to seek U.S. support for their political ambitions. Another former hostage described a typical meeting where Islamic leaders railed against the United States and then requested special favors and visas for their friends.

Iranians have a terrible inferiority complex. They have believed that foreign powers can do as they please within Iran, that the United States is omnipotent and omnipresent, and that those who hold power in Iran must propitiate the United States. Khomeini tried to turn the hostage crisis into a national psychodrama in which Iranians would be shown, once and for all, that "America cannot do a damn thing." America was so seductive and so powerful that the revolution could only be safeguarded by cutting off contacts altogether.

The latest negotiations show that Khomeini has not been able to instill an irreversible hatred of the United States, even among his own disciples. After Khomeini, Iranian politicians will be tempted to play the old game of seeking Washington's favors. They may want U.S. help in ending the war, covert assistance in securing their personal power, trade, technical assistance, arms, and security guarantees in regard to the U.S.S.R. None of them would accept American involvement at any level close to the Shah's years, but it would be a great improvement over the total freeze now in force.

THE UNITED STATES had its own preconditions for a rapprochement: an end to the war with Iraq, ensuring that Iran neither turn to the Soviets as client nor fall to them as victim, and the demand that Iran help free U.S. hostages in Lebanon and stop supporting terrorism. But the administration made three serious errors. First, it moved too fast. Even Iran's most powerful leaders will do little while Khomeini is still alive. Second, the administration should have refused the Iranian demand to dispatch arms (paid for by the Shah's regime) until the war was over and they clearly changed their policy toward terrorism. And third, though there was good reason for tight secrecy, Congress and our allies should have been informed in an appropriate manner. These mistakes were mutually reinforcing. Secrecy, arms, and hostages became an explosive mixture.

The White House political advisers must have hoped that a dramatic breakthrough with Iran would be the long-awaited foreign policy achievement proving this administration was capable of brilliant diplomacy. In the end, it suggested the opposite. In strategic terms, the president's powerful advisers only half understood the situation in Iran. In political and ethical terms, having condemned President Carter's handling of a hostage crisis, opposed compromise with terrorists, and demanded an international arms embargo against Iran, President Reagan trapped himself in contradictions shredding his credibility. Yet critics should separate the misdeeds in Washington from the strategic developments in the Gulf. The controversy will discourage at least this administration from involvement in efforts to resolve the Iran-Iraq war or to improve relations with Iran.

There is a fascinating irony in the affair that proved this administration's nemesis. American leaders must be ready to demonstrate U.S. power and to apply pressure where appropriate. But success almost always requires a second stage, when this leverage is employed with creative diplomacy to negotiate disputes. The White House has found it difficult to move on to this latter phase in arms control and Central America. In the case of Iran, when it finally tried the diplomatic part as well, the administration received a drubbing it will never forget.

BARRY RUBIN

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The case against compassion.

Up From Altruism

NEW YORK magazine recently announced its latest trend: "Doing Good." The Me Decade, we're told, is giving way to a stark sort of altruism. "Volunteers around the city are monitoring shelters for the homeless, taking underprivileged children on Saturday outings, and visiting the terminally ill," say the editors.

It's hard to argue against taking underprivileged children on Saturday outings. Still, something about this predictable zeitgeist flip-flop rang hollow, and it wasn't just the suspicion that many prosperous New Yorkers aren't taking underprivileged children on Saturday outings. The point of trend stories, after all, is to be ahead of the curve. Once everyone in New Jersey is taking underprivileged kids on Saturday outings, there's not much point, is there?

Was the problem *New York*'s silly defense of tax-subsidized high-society charity balls? In part. ("What would the fashion industry do if women didn't have to buy wonderful dresses to wear to them? Charity stimulates our economy," says Mrs. Ezra Zilkha, chairman of "special events" for the Metropolitan Opera.) In part it was the magazine's unquestioning attitude, which accepted subsidizing the Metropolitan Opera and saving high school dropouts as equally do-gooding.

Exhibit A of the new mood, according to *New York*, is the investment banking firm of Bear Stearns. "In 1982 the firm began requiring its managing partners to donate a percentage of their earnings to charity. It is the only Wall Street concern with such a rule," reports Jesse Kornbluth. What percentage? Ten percent? 0.000001 percent? Kornbluth never asks the question—or, at least, never answers it. Bear Stearns chairman Alan C. "Ace" Greenberg describes how he raises funds for the UJA and United Way: "[I]f I call each person who sells us supplies, we get a quick response." Sound like a shakedown? Hey, back off. This is Trend, not journalism. "Gentile, Jew, we don't care," a Bear Stearns partner reveals under Kornbluth's ruthless questioning. "We love to help human beings."

Despite the Me Decade's decay, the sense of smug self-satisfaction pervading "Doing Good" is all too familiar, with assorted yuppies displaying their newfound charitable causes as if conducting a tour of their condos. " 'Whosoever would be master of all must be the servant of all,' " boasts another investment banker, apparently oblivious to the question he's begging. (Besides, adds his partner, charitable contributions make "better tax sense.") Here is the new—really an old—elite lifestyle: conspicuous non-consumption. Make a lot of money on Wall Street and then bestow it dramatically on the thankful helpless. Very New York.

What is really disturbing about the coming altruism boom, though, is not the altruism itself but the accompanying tendency to confuse it with politics, to treat it as an ideology. Pete Hamill's contribution to *New York*'s compassion-fest explicitly equates charity with liberalism—all part of "the struggle to help the disadvantaged." But it's not just Hamill. Ask today's state-of-the-art Democratic politician why we should help the poor, and he'll likely tell you: "compassion." Compassion has become the all-purpose Democratic password, the thin layer of moral insulation that separates even the most market-oriented, standing-tall Democrat from a selfish Reaganite. Senator Bill Bradley calls for "greater caring," for challenging Americans' ideas of "what they owe another human being." "The work of compassion must continue," says Ted Kennedy. "I'm tired of a president who . . . does not appeal to the great expansive generosity of this nation" (Joe Biden).

Most prominently, there's Mario Cuomo, the man who thinks we should be "strong enough to use the words 'love' and 'compassion.' " (Just don't insult his son.) Cuomo's rhetoric routinely sets up a contrast between Republicans, who say, "We can't make it with compassion; it's mushy-headed and liberal. We have to be hard and macho," and Democrats, who "look beyond our own welfare to the good of all and . . . reach down to those at the bottom of the ladder and help them up, if only a rung or two." In his most famous conceit, Cuomo compares the least fortunate members of society to the less fortunate members of a family, an analogy he says "describes better than most textbooks and any speech that I could write what a proper government should be." You don't refuse to lend a hand to your brother-in-law when he's in trouble, do you, even if some of his trouble is his own fault?

CUOMO GIVES compassion a clever twist, though, because at the same time he's appealing to the generosity of the middle-class majority, he suggests that they, in fact, are the ones "locked out" and entitled to government-funded compassion. Thus does virtue pay tribute to vice, and altruism become selfish. It's a nice trick if you can pull it off. Cuomo tries by painting the family portrait in lurid tones, as an oligarchy where all but the rich are so hard up that they merit some assistance. In his rousing "Tale of Two Cities" address to the 1984 Democratic convention, Cuomo spoke of "middle-class parents [who] watch the dreams they hold for their children evaporate," lumping together the homeless and unemployed steelworkers as a "rabble" whose "pain" was ignored by the "relative few," the "royalty" leading the good life.

But compassion—for others or for No. 1—is a miserable basis for liberal politics. It carries the unmistakable implication of dependence and piteousness on the part of those on the receiving end of the sentiment. The demeaning aspect of charity is most evident in private, *New York*-style do-gooding, with its self-satisfied patrons and awed supplicants. It's one reason pre-New Deal union officials talked of "rescuing" their members "from demoralization at the hands of sentimental almsgivers."

The original liberal hope was that government charity would be less demeaning than private charity, especially if it was made an "entitlement," delivered in a dignified

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setting, and hedged about with legal protections—or, others hoped, if the unbowed poor themselves marched on city hall to demand their checks. But neither routinizing nor mau-mauing changed the essence of the relationship. A dole is a dole, and the public has proved quite capable of singling out and stigmatizing unearned government benefits as "welfare," even when they are packaged as "rights." The way Democratic welfare defenders flaunt their compassion only underlines the public's suspicions. To use Cuomo's pet analogy, do we really want a government that treats the poor with the condescension normally reserved for our idiot brother-in-law?

The aim of liberal government should be not to increase the incidence of compassion, but to reduce the opportunity for it. Compassion isn't politics. Compare a child in the terminal cancer ward, or an alcoholic homeless man—two typical "Doing Good" cases—with an unemployed steelworker or ghetto teenager. The former have somehow been rendered helpless. They are the appropriate objects of charitable assistance, balanced, in the case of the homeless, with a paternalistic nudging toward self-reliance. But the steelworker and the teenager can still help themselves; they are free in a way the child and alcoholic are not. When they turn to the government for help, it is (or should be) as self-reliant citizens, and it's a terrible mistake to mix up their plight with the "weak and unfortunate" charity cases. Charity is a noble impulse. But it is not the relation of free, equal citizens.

Compassion *is* mushy-headed. It is not an ideology, because it provides no principle to tell us when our abstract compassionate impulses should stop. We have compassion for the working poor. We have compassion for the unmotivated delinquent who would rather smoke PCP than work. Compassion makes few distinctions—we're all in Cuomo's "family"—which is why a politics based on mass-produced compassion leads naturally to the indiscriminate dispensing of cash in a sort of all-purpose socialized United Way campaign.

ULTIMATELY, Compassion Politics is impractical. If citizens believe the welfare state is a big charity drive, they will naturally stop contributing when they feel they have nothing leftover to give. If "compassion" is the only reason for middle-class people to support job programs for the "underclass," then those programs will go unfunded. If compassion is the reason for middle-class parents to improve urban public schools rather than move to suburbs where their kids don't have to mingle with pushers and hooligans, then they will move to the suburbs. Communities can't last long if their only basis is selflessness.

Cuomo's peculiar perversion—making practically everyone the object of compassion—won't work either. The reality of America is almost an inversion of Cuomo's family portrait: most people are keeping their heads above water, while a minority are going under. If, after hearing Cuomo's famous speech, all those who thought they were leading the good life voted for Reagan, and all those who thought they were in Cuomo's "rabble" voted for Mondale, the results of the 1984 election are easy to explain.

Given this reality, compassion is an unlikely sentiment for cementing an alliance of middle-income taxpayers and the poor. True, it's depressingly easy to convince middle-class Americans—whether they're farmers, students, or the elderly—to accept government subsidies. But that's precisely because a variety of devices, partly real (like the contribution requirement for Social Security) and partly bogus (like the idea that Social Security just pays back those contributions), distinguishes those subsidies from unearned charity in the minds of their recipients. Not even Cuomo's persuasive powers are likely to convince a majority of Americans that they are so hard up they need charity the way unwed teenagers or the homeless do. Self-pity is not our national emotion, at least not yet.

BUT ISN'T the politics of compassion a needed antidote to the politics of special interests? Not really. Those are the two sides of the coin only if you deny the possibility of a *general* interest to be served by liberal, affirmative government. There are plenty of these general interests around, even ones that might give middle-class Americans a good reason for helping the "rabble." Here are three: The general interest in civility—in being able to walk the streets without being mugged by the dispirited children of the underclass, to park cars without having them burglarized. The general interest in not having to spend greater and greater sums to support ever larger generations of impoverished, broken homes. And the most general interest, economic growth. There is a good liberal argument that people are unlikely to take the economic risks necessary to achieve that growth unless they have a sturdy social safety net to fall back on. Surely the number of potential engineers, scientists, businessmen, and doctors who are now wasting themselves in our ghettos represents a loss of GNP far more expensive to taxpayers than the budgetary cost of any program to harness that potential. Let liberals appeal to these general interests, to this sort of selfishness.

Democrats did not achieve greatness in the past on the basis of altruism, any more than they achieved it on the basis of narrow pandering. The New Deal wasn't built on compassion, but on the broad common interest of "one-third of a nation" ill-housed and ill-clothed, and a second third worried it might join the first. It's only in recent decades, as New Dealism has lost this broad, non-altruist appeal, that liberal Democrats have begun actually to embrace the age-old caricature of themselves as mushy-headed bleeding hearts (when they weren't embracing the caricature of themselves as special-interest hacks).

Today's liberals must liberate themselves from compassion. The word should be banned from Democratic speeches. If liberals build a new, lasting movement, it won't be because they convince enough people to be compassionate, or because they convince enough people that they are entitled to have others be compassionate toward them, but because enough people correctly see their own interest in solving the problems of others.

MICKEY KAUS

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Guess which party lacks a plausible presidential candidate?

THE GAP IN THE GOP

BY FRED BARNES

THE HOTTEST NEW fund-raising gimmick of 1986 is an issue tossed into the political hopper by the National Republican Congressional Committee. Last summer the committee dispatched letters to 300,000 occasional party contributors that urged the repeal of the 22nd Amendment, which limits a president to two terms. Send bucks, the letter pleaded, and we'll try to fix it so that your beloved Ronald Reagan can run for president again, maybe even in 1988. This was an idea whose time had come for grass-roots Republicans. Money began pouring in. "I've never seen an idea catch on like that," says Barbara Pardue of the NRCC. "It really snowballed." One million more letters were hastily mailed out. The checks are still coming in.

There's more to the amazing success of the 22nd Amendment pitch than meets the eye. Oh, sure, it reflects enthusiasm for Reagan, barred by law from running again, and premature nostalgia for his presidency. But far more significant is what it says about the candidates for the 1988 Republican presidential nomination. By embracing the idea of repeal—embracing a fantasy, really, because the chances of revoking the amendment are almost nil—the party faithful are sending an early warning about the 1988 contenders. We have seen the GOP future, they're saying, and it doesn't work.

The Republicans have a Reagan gap: he can't run, and those who can don't excite. This has created widespread anxiety about losing the White House, even when the GOP's advantage in presidential races is taken into account. (A majority of electoral votes are in the conservative Sun Belt and West.) It's not that Republicans are demanding either Reagan himself or a close imitation in 1988. They just want a candidate whose support is more than factional and inch-deep. Ironically, it's the Democrats, losers of four of the last five presidential elections, who are brimming with candidates with broad appeal. At least two Democratic contenders, Senator Gary Hart of Colorado and Governor Mario Cuomo of New York, have generated considerably more fervor than any of the Republicans.

Disenchantment with the GOP candidates has produced exactly what you'd expect: a chaotic fight for the nomination, and a dragnet for new candidates. "It's like France after Charlemagne," says Patrick Buchanan, the White House communications chief. "The whole empire is up for grabs." The race "is wide open to other candidates," says moderate Governor Thomas Kean of New Jersey, who insists he won't be one but acts as if he might. A new candidate wouldn't have to do all that well to look good. "If you just go out and do well enough, you'll get support," says strategist John Sears. "If you get some support, you'll get some more." Maybe even win. New Right leader Paul Weyrich says: "I have never seen a situation in my political lifetime, which goes back 30 years, where the atmosphere was so conducive to someone unexpected coming in and taking the prize. This is 1940 all over again." That's the year outsider Wendell Willkie won the GOP nomination.

Three things are responsible for the gap in the race. First, the conservatives, the dominant group in the party, have not united behind a candidate. For more than two decades, the key to conservative control of the presidential nominating process has been near-unanimous support for a single candidate. This alone allowed conservatives to prevail all but once over the less ideological party regulars. In 1964 they gathered behind Barry Goldwater. In 1968 most of them backed Richard Nixon, who was able to brush aside Reagan's last-minute challenge for the nomination. In 1972 they stuck with Nixon in the face of Congressman John Ashbrook's lonely challenge. In 1976 they massed in support of Reagan, who would have captured the nomination except for the fact that his opponent, Gerald Ford, was the incumbent president. In 1980 and 1984 Reagan was their man again.

This year conservatives are all over the lot. Some, especially those in the party establishment, back Vice President George Bush, despite qualms about the tenacity of his conservatism. Others, such as Representative Newt Gingrich of Georgia, are supporting Representative Jack Kemp of New York. A handful favor Senate Republican leader Robert Dole of Kansas. Many evangelical Christians in the conservative movement are lining up with Pat Robertson, the television preacher. And there's also a sizable bloc of conservatives eager for a fresh candidate to enter the race—Governor George Deukmejian of California, perhaps, or Senator William Armstrong of Colorado, or former United Nations Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick, or Patrick Buchanan, or someone else. Conservative disunity has created a new possibility in the race: regulars have a shot at winning the nomination for one of their candidates, a moderate even. "Unless conservatives get behind a particular candidate, that's precisely what can happen," warns Weyrich, who has yet to get behind anyone.

Second, the issues have changed, and Republican candidates have yet to figure out how to play them. It was easy in 1980 and 1984, when the issues were slashing taxes,

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shrinking the federal government, and building up the military. Those issues—the Reagan agenda, in other words—don't resonate anymore. With the top rate on individual income down to 28 percent, it's hard to make lower taxes the centerpiece of a presidential campaign. Attacks on Jimmy Carter no longer work either. When Reagan zinged the hapless Carter in his campaign speeches this year, Republican Senate candidates dipped in the polls. In 1988 the issues are likely to be the trade deficit and international economics, Reagan's federal deficit, and national defense. This is unfamiliar turf to Republicans, even the defense issue. Today the issue is not how much more to spend on defense, but how to spend less more effectively. And what alarms Republicans is that the candidate who's staked out military strategy as his field of expertise is a Democrat, Gary Hart.

Third, there is Reagan himself, the most imposing political personality of the postwar era. He is doing a double whammy on the 1988 candidates. As an enormously popular and highly visible figure, he dwarfs them. Against Reagan as a campaign backdrop, they come off as pygmies. He also intimidates the candidates on issues. Every candidate except former Governor Pierre du Pont of Delaware has been skittish on issues, afraid to clash with Reagan or even address fresh concerns. "If your No. 1 worry is to not prod the president into endorsing your opponent, you're cautious," says Gingrich. The effect is to allow Reagan to define the agenda for Republican candidates. This could be disastrous in 1988. GOP voters like Reagan's policies, but they want to know what comes next. Republican candidates aren't telling them.

SMALL WONDER they've stirred so little passion. Bush is the clear front-runner, the favorite of the party regulars, but still a pale figure to the Republican electorate. He led the CBS News exit poll of Republicans on Election Day in November with 34 percent, roughly the same level of support he got in a new survey by pollster Arthur Finkelstein. Big deal. Bush lacks what Reagan had in the 1970s: burning loyalty from a hard core of supporters. He draws support because he's vice president. And that job is a political straitjacket. For now he is inclined to both cheerlead for Reagan and echo him, and as John Sears says, "You can't be very exciting when all you're saying is, 'Reagan's a great guy.' " But should Bush show a little independence and put some distance between himself and Reagan's policies, he'll instantly be accused of disloyalty. It's a lose-lose situation. And Bush is dogged by the perception that he lacks the moxie and toughness to be a real leader. His performance on TV on election night—he talked cheerfully as the Republican Senate went down the tubes—reinforced that.

For a year now, the candidate with the glorious opportunity has been Jack Kemp. He's squandered it. Kemp simply wasn't ready to emerge as the chief conservative challenger to Bush. He lacked a national political operation and a new set of issues to succeed his old standby, tax cuts. And because he failed to pre-empt the field, other conservatives are now preparing to enter the race. Still, Kemp is acceptable to all conservative factions, and he may yet become their consensus choice. At long last, he has found some new issues. Kemp is the leading Republican proponent of Star Wars. He's rejected the advice of supply-side advisers that the trade deficit isn't a real problem, and he's working up a trade program, and a farm program. He plans to announce his candidacy in early spring.

Bob Dole's problem is that he's never excited grass-roots Republicans, whether conservatives or regulars. What appeal he's had grew out of his power in the Senate. Ideas are not his long suit. He leaves them to other politicians like Kemp. Now, with the Senate going Democratic, his power is sharply diminished. He can't woo conservative leaders as he once did by promising to put their issues on the Senate agenda. Howard Baker, who left the Senate in 1984, has one idea: raise taxes. But "Let's have a tax hike" will never be a Republican applause line. A bigger problem for Baker is that he's almost vanished from public life, though he's making a mint now as a Washington attorney. His wife is ill, and associates believe he won't run in 1988 after all.

Pat Robertson will, but he's failed to attract support outside the Christian evangelical community. And even evangelicals are sharply divided on whether he should run. The Christian press is filled with articles cautioning Robertson about the perils of secular politics. And New Right leaders who once saw Robertson as a new Reagan have cooled on him. "He's perceived only as a narrow candidate of a faction within the party," says Howard Phillips of the Conservative Caucus. "I think he's more than that, but he hasn't demonstrated it." Pete du Pont hasn't demonstrated that either. "I give him credit for guts," says Phillips of du Pont's proposals for drug testing all high school kids and revamping Social Security. But du Pont hasn't found a constituency. He's too radical on issues for regulars, too establishment-looking for conservatives.

Then there are the three Republican heavies hanging around on the sidelines. Senator Paul Laxalt of Nevada loudly announced that he's considering the race, but that failed to touch off a ground swell. If he runs, says Laxalt, it will be to protect the Reagan legacy. That would make him a candidate of the past, when what's needed is someone with a forward-looking agenda. Chances are, he won't run. But Alexander Haig, Reagan's secretary of state until 1982, and Donald Rumsfeld, Ford's secretary of defense from 1975 on, intends to run. Why? God only knows. Haig's never held elective office, and Rumsfeld was a congressman a generation ago. The prospect of their candidacies has gripped practically no one.

IF THE ENTIRE crew from Bush to Haig and Rumsfeld can't ward off the blahs for Republicans, who might? Well, here's where the Great Mentioner, that mysterious force in American politics, enters the game. I've counted five other names that are being mentioned—by the press, by politicians, by frantic Republicans looking for a fresh

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face—as potential candidates. They have several things in common. They insist they aren't running, or even thinking very seriously about it. They have no shadow campaign organization waiting for a signal. But they all maintain high political profiles.

Let's move from left to right, starting with Tom Kean (pronounced cane), the most interesting of the group. Kean's claim to fame is his remarkable re-election victory in New Jersey in 1985 over an attractive young Democrat. Kean won 70 percent to 30 percent. He won 60 percent of the black vote, about six times the percentage the average Republican candidate might expect. He won nearly half of the Democratic vote. And his landslide produced a Republican assembly in New Jersey for the first time in years. All this has prompted Kean to proselytize his own political credo, which he calls "the politics of inclusion."

To become the majority party, Kean says Republicans need "a vision that includes everybody," and one that is "continuing," not "based on one person." He promotes a whole new agenda: education reform, environmentalism, civil rights, economic opportunity, plus GOP staples such as tax incentives and tough criminal enforcement. He suggests that urban enterprise zones are the modern equivalent of the plots of Western land offered to settlers by Abraham Lincoln in the Homestead Act. The homestead plots were open to anyone, distributed without the need of a new federal bureaucracy, and cost no federal money. "It was a Republican program because it limited government while offering to all unlimited dreams," Kean says.

He is no conservative. Kean is pro-choice on abortion, vetoed a school prayer bill, and divested the state pension fund of holdings in companies doing business in South Africa. But conservatives don't reject him. Strategist Jeffrey Bell, who will soon join the Kemp campaign, notes that Kean supports Star Wars and increased aid to the Nicaraguan *contras*. Gingrich heard Kean address a political action committee in November and was impressed: "The way he framed and explained his achievement in the black community was in terms of our values."

KEAN SAYS he's too tied down in New Jersey to run for president, but that the governor of California, George Deukmejian, can run without leaving the state. Since California is a media center, Deukmejian "projects a national image." Not quite. Deukmejian, who was re-elected in November with 62 percent of the vote, isn't widely known outside California. What makes him appealing as a presidential candidate is that he can have 12 percent of the GOP delegates for the asking (California's share) and, as a moderate-to-conservative, he is broadly acceptable in the party. That's the good news. The bad news is that he's a boring speaker, and the one issue he's passionate about is the death penalty. It's hard to make a national campaign out of that. Still, he's thwarted the Democratic leadership of the California legislature time and again, and averted a tax increase, which is better than Reagan did as governor.

On the right, the mentionees are touted as Reagan-like unifiers, able to bring together the conservative factions. Senator Gordon Humphrey of New Hampshire says Senator William Armstrong of Colorado is the perfect unity candidate, a conservative Westerner and evangelical Christian who'd run well in the South and appeal to the religious right. And Armstrong, who gets along with Republican moderates in the Senate, isn't offensive to party regulars. Just before Thanksgiving, Humphrey conferred with Armstrong about a presidential race. "I can tell you he's seriously considering it," says Humphrey, but Armstrong isn't talking. He is a traditional conservative who worries about the deficit. But he's also zealous about social issues and is strongly opposed to abortion. His aides note that he won re-election in 1982 with 64 percent of the vote, while Gary Hart was re-elected in 1980 with only 51 percent.

Next there's Jeane Kirkpatrick, who's back to teaching at Georgetown University, doing a weekly newspaper column and writing a book on her experiences at the United Nations (to be published next fall). "I am not a candidate, and I don't expect to be," she says. But she adds, "I find it very hard to disengage [from politics]. It's more difficult than I expected it to be. So I haven't." In short, she loves big-time politics. She also has begun injecting domestic issues into her Republican stump speech. "I am very ready to talk about the human community appropriate to a civilized society," she says. Arthur Finkelstein, the pollster, is keen on getting her to run. "This [1988] is the only shot she'll ever have," he says.

TWO DAYS after the November election, Pat Buchanan gave a pep talk to conservative leaders at the White House. Their final question was: Are you running for president? Buchanan smiled, turned the program over to an aide, and walked from the room—to loud cheers. When asked on "The CBS Morning News" about presidential plans, Buchanan said he had none, then added, "Keep talking it up." That was a joke, but Buchanan takes the idea at least half-seriously. Two conservative leaders want him to run, Howard Phillips and Tom Ellis, the chairman of Jesse Helms's Congressional Club. "Pat can be the next Reagan," says Phillips. "He'd be a super candidate and a super president," says Ellis. Buchanan has told them he'll keep the presidential option open.

The talk about Buchanan shows how confused Republicans are about 1988. Phillips says Buchanan represents the "next generation of leadership in the post-Reagan era." He also says Buchanan is the "next Reagan." You can't have it both ways. If your guy is the new Reagan, he can't be a member of a new generation. He's a merely younger version of the past. Voters are interested in the future. The ironic thing about Republican enthusiasm for repealing the 22nd Amendment is that this wouldn't help the party at all. It would hurt. Suppose Reagan, his agenda exhausted, were the Republican nominee in 1988. The truth is he'd lose. And so will any Republican candidate who doesn't understand this. □

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Dark Sides

Dennis O'Rourke, an Australian filmmaker, objects to moral sloth. His documentary *Half Life* reveals few new facts about its subject, but O'Rourke puts the facts before us with direct and compelling human presence—to jog us. He reminds us of the world's ability to file and forget, an ability not exactly absent from the American mind, and he does it chiefly by showing us people, faces, children playing.

Half Life
(Kino International)
Nobody's Fool
(Island Pictures)

The United States detonated its first H-bomb on March 1, 1954, at Bikini in the Marshall Islands. Six years earlier the United States had tested two A-bombs at Bikini after evacuating all people within a 500-kilometer radius. The H-bomb was estimated to be at least 500 times more powerful than the A-bomb. The people on two atolls downwind of Bikini were not evacuated. Meteorological conditions were found to be satisfactory; but on the basis of records, O'Rourke says that the wind shifted 12 hours before the explosion, that the Americans in command knew this, that they proceeded anyway. The people on the downwind islands thought the fallout was snow, which they knew about but of course had never seen; their children went out to romp in it.

The results have been catastrophic for those people: tumors, cancer, miscarriages, genetic disruptions. Congress has investigated; lawsuits have been filed. As a result of all the tests, said the *Washington Post* (April 7, 1986),

> So many lawsuits have been filed . . . that seven American law firms now work jointly on the Marshall Islands Atomic Testing Litigation Project, which represents 13,000 people suing U.S. agencies for wrongful death, personal injury and destructive contamination of their property.

Who cares about those people, really? Not us. I saw a two-hour TV play a few weeks ago, uncommonly well done, about the effects of Agent Orange on American personnel in Vietnam. The stories are horrible; yet in the entire two hours, not one word was said about the Vietnamese who lived then and continue to live in the defoliated areas. Similarly, though many of us—perhaps all of us—know about the Marshall Islands disaster, it hasn't really registered. If it had, we might not be so eager to swathe ourselves with pieties about the humane purposes of nuclear defense.

Members of the Defense Nuclear Agency have seen O'Rourke's film, and according to the *Post*, the DNA has stated: "While we found the film to be interesting and informative, we strongly disagree with the implication that the responsible government officials intended to engage in human experimentation." We can all be glad, if surprised, that an individual Australian filmmaker's effort was "informative" to the DNA; we might have supposed that they were previously informed. The film certainly does suggest that the wind shift was disregarded so that the H-bomb effects on human beings could be measured. No adjective could adequately describe that action if it were true; but it doesn't need to be true for *Half Life* to be frightening. Especially frightening because we already know the basic facts and ignore them.

We can hope, if we like, that this film will affect governments, ours and others. It may be more practical to hope that it will affect the public. O'Rourke, who has had much experience with films about Pacific islanders and who is not, as it happens, an anti-nuclear activist, was appalled by what had happened to these particular people on these particular atolls. In this decently crafted film, he merely shows them to us and lets them speak. What these people tell us, through their beings and their stories, is essentially what *Dr. Strangelove* told us over 20 years ago: the Doomsday machine is not the bomb but man.

Beth Henley has bad luck. She writes with a unique voice, quiet, comic, even whimsical, but with hidden venom. The two plays of hers that I have seen, *Crimes of the Heart* and *The Miss Firecracker Contest*, are initially lulling: they seem like more Southern, honey-dripping, small-town comic curlicues until they reveal the harshness under the honey. But the productions that I saw were out of balance. The plays became small-town character comedies, with just enough dissonance to make them seem slightly satiric of the genre. But they are sui generis.

Bad luck again for Henley with her screenplay *Nobody's Fool*. Once again she has written a story of the skull beneath the skin. Cassie is a young woman in an Arizona town. (The Arizona setting, possibly chosen for pictorial reasons, doesn't disguise the Henley Deep South touch.) Cassie seems just another frustrated daydreamer, working as a waitress, talking to herself a good deal, living—just tolerably—with her pettish mother and goony kid brother. She attracts, without trying, a young man, Riley, who is in town for the summer working as the designer for an outdoor Shakespeare festival. She is reluctant to get involved with him, but she

FILMS WORTH SEEING

The Color of Money. Martin Scorsese gives this sequel to *The Hustler* near-irrational heat. Paul Newman does his best with a role that he has outgrown. The script, for all its pungency, is lax. (Reviewed 11/17/86)

Marlene. A documentary about Dietrich, who appears only in film clips from the past, though her present self is heard throughout. Maximilian Schell, who interviewed her and who directed, has made a fascinating oddity instead of a trite retrospective tribute. (12/8/86)

Ménage. Gerard Depardieu exhilarates this anti-conventional comedy leap. Only when the film begins to worry about plot does it sag. But acceptances about sex and society take a drubbing en route. (11/3/86)

Sid and Nancy. This sordid tale of the punk rocker Sid Vicious and his girlfriend is turned into a gripping view of an avenue to hell. Good acting, writing, direction. (10/27/86)

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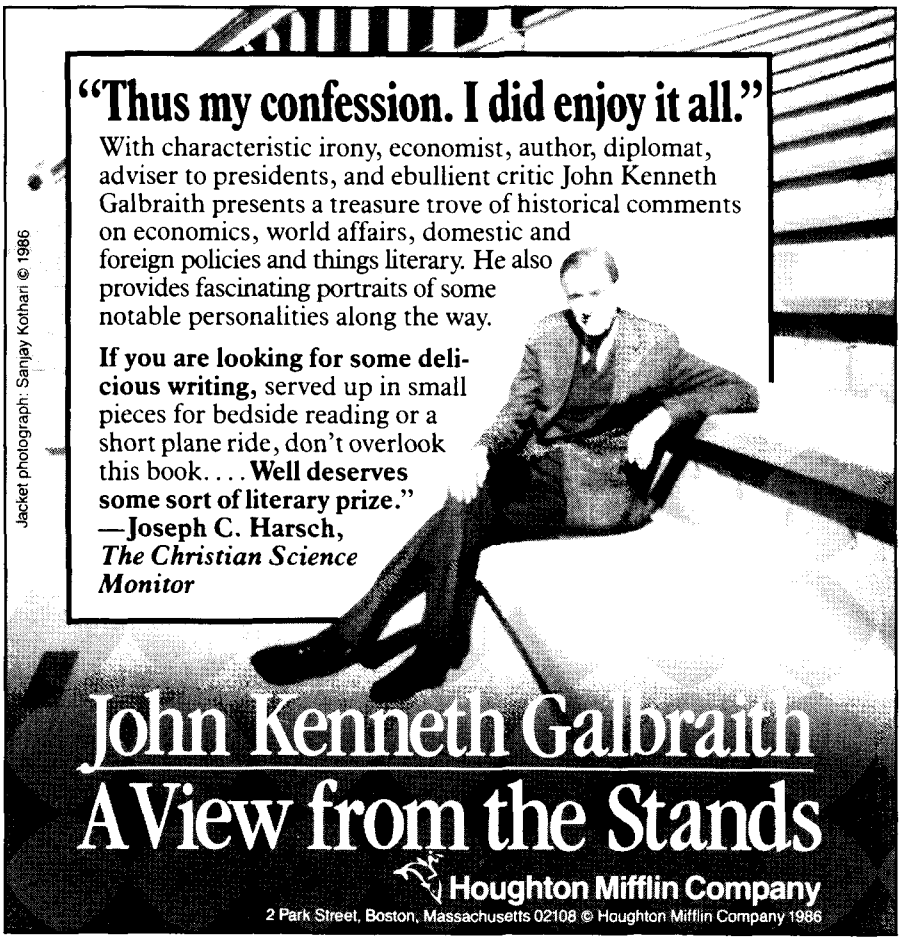
does. At summer's end he invites her to come back to L.A. with him, and after some last-minute delays, she joins him. That's Script No. 1, well enough written.

Script No. 2, counterpointed throughout, is what makes *Nobody's Fool* interesting—the characteristic Henley dark undertone. Before the story begins, Cassie has had a child by Billy, a local youth whom she loved dearly. When she told him she was pregnant, he didn't offer to marry her, he offered to pay half for the abortion; and she stabbed him in the cheek with a fork. She has given the baby up for adoption. Even after all this, even after she meets Riley, even after Billy marries another young woman, Cassie is still vulnerable to Billy. As handled in the film, Script No. 2 seems merely "backstory"—what happened before the film begins—carried into the present to thicken the plot a bit, instead of being used to ground this whimsical romance in bitterness. The two scripts are of course one script: the account of a young woman unable to deal with the grim events of her past, sheltering herself in fabricated self-possession, in brazening out her existence as a town "character," unable to respond to a newcomer because of her past experience and, what's worse, unable to break the first lover's hold on her. Basically it's a film about helplessness and its counterfeit armor, about a young woman in the grip of a destructive sexual attraction who is ultimately saved by another lover—who may or may not turn out to be equally hurtful. Henley even underscores the dark basic threats in the story—in the world—with such touches as Cassie's visits to a friend who is now gravely disturbed mentally.

Those visits seem anomalous in *Nobody's Fool*, but that's because of the way it has been directed and acted—as pleasant fluff with a few "real" hues. Cassie is played by Rosanna Arquette, that amateur actress crammed with self-love, who clumsily opts for cuteness all the way. Eric Roberts plays Riley with only one thing in mind: to appear as macho as possible. He strikes bold male stances, utilizes undershirt scenes in which he can flex muscles, and always has his curly locks carefully disarrayed. The director, Evelyn Purcell, has not been able to help either of these actors or to fulfill the script's polyphony—possibly because she was so intent on getting pretty Arizona landscapes into the film.

A film of *Crimes of the Heart* is on its way. Here's hoping. □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ROBERT BRUSTEIN ON THEATER

Bach Goes to Town

Two recent New York productions begin with overtures from Bach but couldn't be more different in tone or purpose. Simon Gray's *The Common Pursuit* (Promenade Theatre) is about a quintet of Cambridge-educated whites completely at home with the tradition of European classical music. George C. Wolfe's *The Colored Museum* (The Public Theater) features a gallery of American blacks seeking to establish their own identity among the oppressive artifacts of Western culture. The first piece, a drama, tends to shallowness, possibly out of overcomplacency. The second, a satire, tends to overstatement, perhaps out of a sense of cultural displacement. Both have charms; neither fulfills its implied intentions.

Simon Gray's most recent work lets us listen for a while to Bach's lovely Suite No. 3 in A, while contemplating David Jenkins's handsome university setting. Then it launches into its subject: the deterioration of youthful ethical idealism amid the compromises of the modern world. Five undergraduates have determined to start a literary magazine called *The Common Pursuit*, after a celebrated collection of essays by their leader's tutor, the critic F. R. Leavis. Each has a special ambition: Stuart, the editor (Kristoffer Tabori), wants an editorial policy of uncompromising standards; Martin, the entrepreneur (Michael Countryman), wants to be associated with men of high intellect; Humphrey, the philosopher (Peter Friedman), wants to lead a good moral life; Peter, the historian known as Captain Marvel because of his sexual prowess (Dylan Baker), wants to swell his list of female conquests; and Nick, the wit (Nathan Lane), wants to become the drama critic for the Sunday *Times*. There is also a girl in this bunch—Marigold (Judy Geeson)—whose ambitions are limited largely to going to bed with Stuart.

I am told these characters are all based on Gray's Cambridge contemporaries, but only Nick Finchling—obviously modeled on the flamboyant, chain-smoking Kenneth Tynan—was identifiable to me. Having known Tynan, I can testify that Gray's vaguely vituperative characterization of an ambitious media sellout does little justice to this witty, engaging man. But it is not really necessary to hold the *clef* to this *drame* in order to recognize that almost all of the characters are superficially drawn and obscurely motivated.

Gray gets considerable mileage out of the nostalgic pathos surrounding faded ideals. Moving his characters through 20 years of growing disillusionment, he dramatizes the futility of trying to maintain standards in a world dominated by philistines and fools. The magazine is going under for lack of funds and subscribers; only an arts council grant will save it, but the panel is hostile to such an "elitist" enterprise. Stuart rejects Martin's offer to make the magazine a subsidiary of his prosperous publishing house. The loyal Marigold alone exhorts him to fight for his ideals ("You musn't give up, you musn't"). To relieve pressure on Stuart, and without his consent, Marigold has aborted their baby ("I didn't want you to have to choose"). And although Peter, a sitting member of the arts council, momentarily saves the magazine, he achieves this miracle only by reading aloud rejected submissions—Nick's glitzy journalism for *Vogue* and crude revolutionary poems by some "Belfast hooligans."

The stage is set for the final sellout—literally set, as Stuart's seedy office transforms into the plush executive publishing suite of Martin. The magazine is dead. Nick has become a celebrity reviewer on the BBC, sharing the screen with a "balding portly poet" (John Betjeman?); Peter, working on his second wife and eighth child, is still chasing the ladies, while contriving semiplagiarized best-sellers with titles like *Great Religious Leaders of World History*; Stuart is working for Martin, editing three novels a year and poetry that nobody reads. He and Marigold have married but have no children since his figurative sterility has now become biological (he's impotent as well). Among the revelations in this act: Martin has been sleeping with Marigold and she is pregnant; and Nick has contracted emphysema—as did Tynan, who died of the disease.

Humphrey, the only surviving Leavisite, has become Senior Moral Tutor at Cambridge. But even this lonely paragon of integrity is tainted by the end, murdered by a homosexual pickup in his Cambridge rooms. As the friends gather to make the funeral arrangements, they pronounce Humphrey the best of them, because "at least he didn't mess up any lives." In a mournful coup de theatre, we are back in Stuart's rooms at the beginning of the action as the young men confidently prepare to bring their integrity to the world.

Not bad, not bad—in fact, considerably more engaging than Gray's usual school plays—and with the author and Michael McGuire directing, the production has a nice glossy finish, heightened by accomplished performers. The play has doses of wit and some literary cunning, and while the plotting is occasionally predictable and the exposition naked, one is willing to forgive the excessive transparency for the sake of the elegiac mood. What is less forgivable is the uninvestigated nature of character actions, particularly the actions of Marigold. What modern woman would unilaterally undertake an abortion alleging it was to spare her lover a difficult choice? And even if such a dubious paragon existed, would she then betray him with his friend without a word of explanation? Marigold's motivations, as well as her character, remain an unplumbed mystery, but it is a mystery that suggests the failure of art, not its consummation.

Finally, if I resist the appeal of *The Common Pursuit*, it's because Gray's central theme—how the fruits of success ripen into professional compromise and marital breakdown—has become such a staple of upper-middle-class English drama. This has been the abiding theme of Harold Pinter in *Betrayal*, Peter Nichols in *Passion Play*, Michael Frayn in *Benefactors*, Tom Stoppard in *The Real Thing*, etc., and we've had it. I remember a time, not long before Thatcher, when English drama had grit, when it confronted the modern world with rebel energy, when it was something more than witty accounts of conservative artists lacerating themselves on their own success.

George C. Wolfe's *The Colored Museum* would seem to justify those demands. It is lively and loud and full of fiery jive. The Brandenburg Concerto that opens the evening is soon undercut by reggae, New Orleans jazz, gospel, and snatches of Ellington, Satchmo, Miles Davis, Billie Holiday, Bessie Smith, and the Supremes. Apparently, *The Colored Museum* is going to have something cogent to say about the clash of cultures, and about the awkwardness of black assimilation,

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voluntary or involuntary, into the white world. Some of this is provocative: the opening sequence aboard a "Celebrity Slave Ship" flying at high altitudes where "shackles must be worn at all times" and earphones can be purchased for "the price of your first-born male," and a skit involving a prosperous member of the black bourgeoisie who carries a Saks Fifth Avenue shopping bag and plops everything connected to his past (his first pair of Converse All-Stars, his autographed photo of Stokely Carmichael) into a dumpster, finally adding to the pile a contemptuous street kid who represents his repressed rage ("Being black is too emotionally taxing; therefore I will be black only on weekends and holidays"). Other sketches are thinner, less coherent, overextended: an endless monologue, performed at high decibel screech, by a French-accented gussied-up singer named La La Lamazing Grace; another featuring a transvestite named Miss ROJ, shouted so loudly you can barely hear the dialogue.

"The Last Mama-on-the-Couch Play"—perhaps the most celebrated "exhibit" in Wolfe's "museum"—displays both the felicities and the weaknesses of the piece as a whole. Subtitled "a searing domestic play which tears at the very fabric of racist America," this is a satire not just of Lorraine Hansberry's *Raisin in the Sun* but of the whole range of serious black drama and commercial black musicals. An omnipresent stage manager hands Mama an award when she slaps her son across the room for questioning God, and all the actors slip into cultured Shakespearean cadences ("What's gotten into you?" "Julliard, good brother"). The malcontented Walter-Lee-Beau-Willy, always bellyaching about "The Man," is convicted of overacting and shot; the stage manager cushions his head with a pillow, saying, "If only he could have been born in an All-Black musical." In response, the entire family is reincarnated, singing and dancing, no doubt in *Raisin*.

Bravely pinpointing the creaky conventions and clichéd themes of Broadway-bound black realism, the sketch doesn't always rise above the level of a drama school takeoff. And this is generally true of the entire show, which is uneven, both in writing and performance. On the other hand, *The Colored Museum* is significant less as an artistic achievement than as a signal advance beyond the imperatives of black pride. It is easy enough to satirize white attitudes toward

New from Oxford

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T.S. Eliot and His Context

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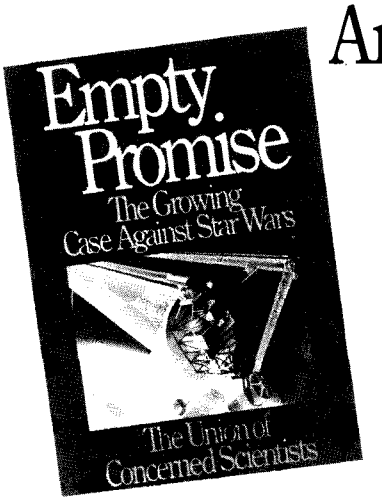

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racial issues (a staple of black drama since the war). What is considerably rarer—and more difficult—is to satirize black attitudes as well. Richard Pryor has done this, albeit with more wit and intensity, and so, with more energy, has Eddie Murphy. But *The Colored Museum* is still a work of considerable courage for which the author is bound to pay a price.

Indeed, he is paying it already. The play has been savagely reviewed in the *Village Voice* by a black woman, Thalani Davis. Charging that Wolfe's satire is primarily aimed at successful black woman entertainers, Davis has indicted him for misogyny, hauling him before a feminist court in a display of the kind of resentment that black women are increasingly expressing toward black men. Returning to the fray one issue later, in response to a positive review by a white critic, Davis asserts that the opening sequence is "rather like a campy send-up of the Holocaust followed by an arch parody of Jewish immigrants changing their names," adding: "It's disturbing that Frank Rich, Clive Barnes, Allan Wallach, and Michael Feingold were able to laugh at Celebrity Slave Ship. That playwright Wolfe is laughing is devastating, a sign of how very deep self-hatred has run in the black psyche." If Davis is insinuating that these (mostly Jewish) critics are praising Wolfe for satirizing certain subjects in a way that Jews would never tolerate in their own case, then I urge her to revisit the movies of Woody Allen and Mel Brooks (whose *The Producers* actually *does* feature "a campy send-up of the Holocaust"). There she might see that self-satire is not necessarily equivalent to self-hatred; indeed, it signifies a capacity to transcend one's preoccupation with oppression. As for Wolfe's "devastating" laughter, I believe it more accurate to call it "liberating," since it is a sign of genuine racial confidence.

I regret putting myself in the crossfire between black men and black women, or black artists and Jewish critics, or engaging myself in the internecine battles of the *Village Voice*. But *The Colored Museum*, like most suppressed things finally exposed to the air, is bound to inspire considerable rancor and misunderstanding. It's too bad the ideological climate is still so choked that it won't permit such works to be evaluated on their own terms, free of external imperatives or intimidated criticism. It's that kind of well-tempered world that produced Bach, as it also produced Miles Davis and Duke Ellington.

THE ROAD TO VICHY

Neither Right nor Left: Fascist Ideology in France
by Zeev Sternhell
translated by David Maisel

(University of California Press, 416 pp., $45)

Among the witnesses who came or wrote to the court in Paris in 1983 were some of the most prestigious personalities in France, from both the right and the left: Raymond Aron, for instance, and Michel Rocard, then minister of agriculture and one of the brightest stars in the socialist firmament. All testified on behalf of the elderly political scientist and writer Bertrand de Jouvenel, who had brought a lawsuit against the Israeli historian Zeev Sternhell. In *Neither Right nor Left: Fascist Ideology in France*, one of the most controversial historical studies about France between the world wars, Sternhell had accused Jouvenel of harboring fascist sympathies during the '30s (referring to a famous interview of Hitler by Jouvenel in March 1936, for instance, Sternhell maintained that it "eulogizes the entire [Nazi] system") and of a more than ambiguous attitude toward fascism during the early years of the war, before he fled to Switzerland.

According to the witnesses, however, Jouvenel was neither a fascist nor a collaborator. They argued that his writings and his commitments, like those of many others of his generation, had to be considered in their context. He may have expressed his opposition to the existing liberal order, he may have called for new values and new ways, he may have occasionally expressed admiration for what was being achieved beyond the Rhine or the Alps—but all this was not fascism.

On October 17, 1983, after leaving the court, Raymond Aron is reported to have said: *"Je crois que je suis arrivé à dire l'essentiel"* ("I think that I managed to say the essential"). A few moments later, he suffered a heart attack and died. Though they almost certainly referred to the Jouvenel case, these last words could have served as the epitaph to Aron's life. Still, in such matters as the definition of fascism, and more particularly the definition of fascism in France, who really knows what the essential is? The court clarified little. On February 1, 1984, it sentenced Zeev Sternhell and his publisher to pay one franc, a symbolic extraction of damages, to Jouvenel. The decision was based on only two passages in the book, out of the many objected to by the plaintiff. The essential, then, remained obscure, as anybody familiar with the ugly and difficult subject might have expected.

While Sternhell's study raises many problems about an entire century of French history, his book provoked such a heated response because his central argument about the '30s touched wounds that have not yet healed, summoned back a past that has not yet been reckoned with in French consciousness. Jouvenel's was one of many similar political and ideological commitments in "French intellectual dissidence" between the wars. The ambiguity of the court's verdict reflected the attitude of a whole generation. Sternhell's study has been accused of being too schematic, too encompassing, too extreme; but in fact some parts of the story could have been painted in even darker colors. And the issues raised by Sternhell's extraordinary book have rarely been so rigorously and systematically presented. His argument may be summed up in a single statement: the penetration of fascism into French society, particularly among the intellectuals, was far deeper than historians since the war have recognized. As he writes:

> A close examination of these ideas reveals the profound attraction fascism held for important and often unexpected sections of the public and the intellectual world. The broad dissemination of these ideas does not attest, as some claim, to their unimpeachably non-fascist character, but, on the contrary, demonstrates that a fascist type of thought was at that time very prevalent, that its roots went deep, and that its influence was considerable. That eminently respectable people professed such ideas does not mean that they were ideas entirely foreign to fascism, but simply that fascism was then part of the intellectual baggage of eminently respectable people.

The foundation of Sternhell's argument was laid in his two previous books, *Maurice Barrès and French Nationalism* and *The Revolutionary Right, 1885-1914: The*

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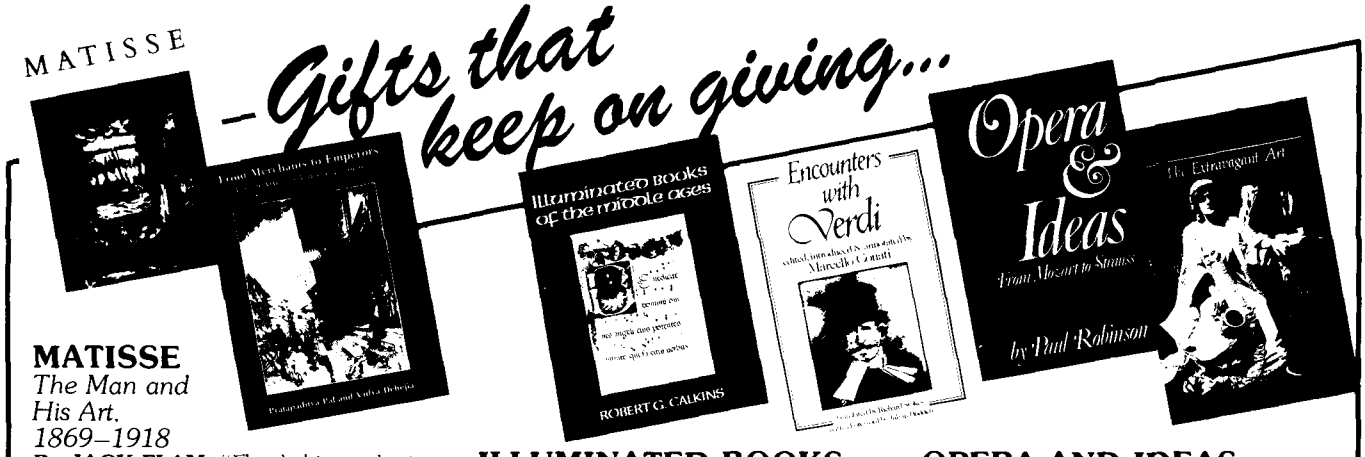
French Origins of Fascism. In those books, and in his new one, Sternhell presents a particular definition of fascism, and argues that at the end of the 19th century France became the cradle and the breeding ground of fascist ideology in its purest form. He observes in *Neither Right nor Left*:

> Not only did French fascism, despite its political weakness, come closest to the ideal, the 'idea' of fascism in the Weberian sense of the term, but France was also the country in which the fascist ideology in its main aspects came into being a good 20 years before similar ideologies appeared elsewhere in Europe, particularly in Italy.

The starting point of Sternhell's argument is not only that a definition of fascism is possible, that there is what Ernst Nolte called a "fascist minimum," but, more significantly, that there is a doctrine, a "theoretical dimension," common to all the various movements known as fascist. Some have argued that such a definition is impossible: Palmiro Togliatti, for example, insisted in 1935 that "fascism should never be regarded as something definitively characterized, it should be thought of rather as something developing, never static, never as a pattern or as a model." Others maintain that the differences among movements characterized as fascist were greater than their similarities. Still others claim that even if a common ground can be found, it is determined mainly by the social basis, the organizational structure and political "praxis" of fascist movements, not by their doctrine. One could make the case, for example, that Benito Mussolini had one ideology when he was a Marxist, that he had another when he clung to a combination of Marx with Nietzsche and Sorel, but that he became more and more of a pragmatist after the birth of fascism. And perhaps the common ground was really no more than a "fascist style," as evoked, for instance, by Gottfried Benn, the German poet and Nazi sympathizer, in early 1934, when he defined its three central forms: "The black shirt, with its color of terror and death, the battle cry 'a noi' and the battle song 'Giovinezza.' "

But for Sternhell, as for Nolte, Stanley Payne, A. James Gregor, and others, there is an identifiable fascist ideology. It is, in Sternhell's words, "a complete ideological system." This system is characterized, at the level of politics, by the rejection of all existing political systems, of capitalism and liberalism as well as Marxism, in favor of the search for a revolutionary "non-conformist" synthesis of right and left. Such a synthesis is itself characterized by an authoritarian and elitist political order, often linked to a supreme leader. And this dream includes the negation not only of the parliamentary system, but of a free economy as well. A planned and centrally directed economy—"planism," as it came to be known—is an essential component of fascist ideology. As for Marxism, its "revision" becomes, for Sternhell, an integral step on the way to fascism: "It was the revision of Marxism," he says, referring to thinkers from Georges Sorel to Henri De Man, "that constituted the most significant ideological aspect of fascism." The reinterpretation of Marxism was designed to make it nationalist ("socialist nationalism" or "national socialism") and anti-materialist. This revision brought about the coincidence of political and ideological opposites, of themes from the radical right and the radical left, that is the most fundamental feature of fascism.

For Sternhell, however, fascism was



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something still more profound: it was a reaction against the central values of bourgeois civilization and a direct result of the crisis of that civilization. Sternhell writes at length of what he calls "spiritualistic fascism": the fight against materialism is, as he puts it, the alpha and omega of this school of thought. In its struggle against liberal individualism and Marxist naturalism, fascism sought to change society not only politically and economically, but ethically and aesthetically as well. Fascism proposed the creation of a new man, who would stand for the classic anti-bourgeois virtues: heroism, energy, the sense of duty and sacrifice, acceptance of the primacy of collectivity over the rights of the individual.

Sternhell's definition does not retire all the difficulties. If all or most of these attributes were required to identify a fascist, you would find very few fascists. Thus Nazism, with its emphasis on race, is not included by Sternhell in his definition—a significant omission. He finds fascism mostly in Italy and in France, as well as among the smaller movements of Western Europe that called themselves fascist. Yet if only some of Sternhell's criteria are necessary for a definition of fascism, if you may pick and choose according to circumstances, the field of fascism becomes almost boundless. And if you argue, as Sternhell does, that antimaterialism is the common denominator for all fascists, then any traditional Catholic, for instance, may belong to the fascist fold; and we are back at square one.

BUT STERNHELL'S historical argument—that late 19th-century France was the real cradle of fascism—is the heart of the matter. It was then that a new revolutionary right appeared, a right entirely different from and violently opposed to the traditional right, and which sought a "rapprochement" with a "new left" that was itself breaking away from traditional Marxism. The revolutionary right aspired to mobilize the masses; it created fighting *ligues*; it was impregnated with various themes of social Darwinism; it was anti-Semitic to the core; it fought to destroy the liberal order and the republican system. Edouard Drumont, modern France's most acerbic anti-Semitic pamphleteer (with the possible exception of Céline), was one of its prophets, and so was young Maurice Barrès, the "poet" of French nationalism; Paul Deroulède, Jules Guerin, and the Marquis de Morès were its activists; and the Action Française expressed some of its extreme political themes.

The dissidents from the left were Georges Sorel, Gustav Hervé, Alexandre Zévaès, Jean Allemane, Hubert Lagardelle, Edouard Berth, Pierre Biétry, and the Jaunes, among others. Briefly, this radical left rejected the compromise between socialism and the bourgeois system, the reformist socialism that closed ranks with bourgeois republicanism in the wake of the Dreyfus affair. It hated "the debilitating atmosphere of social peace" and it dreamed of "warlike action." Those socialists who rejected compromise but maintained the category of class and the ideal of a proletarian revolution would take the road of Leninism. Those who wished to include the whole nation in their fight for renewal would be attracted to fascism.

According to Sternhell, the meeting of the new right and the new left occurred in a preliminary form in France during the 1880s, during the Boulangist agitation. Later, on the eve of the First World War, it occurred almost simultaneously in Italy and, again, in France. In 1910, Arturo Labriola and Robert Michels collaborated with the theoretician of Italian nationalism Enrico Corradini in the founding of *La Lupa*. At more or less the same time, disciples of Georges Sorel, led by Edouard Berth, joined forces with na-

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tionalists of the Action Française in the establishment of the Cercle Proudhon. Neither right nor left, then, fascism found its early doctrine and its early voice.

Again, there are problems with Sternhell's generalizations. In some ways, the Italian synthesis differed from the French: anti-Semitism, a central feature of the Cercle Proudhon, did not exist among the Italian "fascists." More significantly, fascism as a political movement emerged only after the war. In France, in fact, none of the major prewar "fascists" became full-fledged fascists after the war, except for Georges Valois. Berth moved toward the Third International, and Sorel followed his own idiosyncratic path. Can a doctrine rooted in the cult of action be called fascist before the real basis for action—that is, the fascist movement—exists? It is true that some French fascists of the '20s and '30s (Valois, Pierre Andreu, Pierre Drieu La Rochelle) indeed referred to the "fascism of 1913," and stated quite explicitly that fascism was born on the eve of the Great War. For example, Drieu La Rochelle, the most prestigious fascist literary figure, wrote in 1936 about this early period:

> When one refers to this epoch, one notices that some elements of the fascist atmosphere were gathered in France around 1913, before anywhere else. There were young people, issued from various classes of society, who were animated with the love of heroism and violence and who dreamt of fighting what they called evil on two fronts: capitalism and parliamentary socialism; they thought of taking the good from the two sides. . . . The marriage of nationalism and socialism was already planned.

Still, "some elements of the fascist atmosphere" is different from "fascism." The fascists mythologized themselves, after all, much like the Nazis, who found precursors for themselves throughout German history, from the recent past to the most remote Germanic tribes. Similarly, in 1926 Valois, the first authentic fascist on the French scene, wrote that fascism was the "conclusion of the movement of 1789." Later, both the theoreticians of Jacques Doriot's Parti Populaire Français and Marcel Déat, one of the most active French collaborators with the Nazis during the war, stated that the French Revolution in its Jacobin phase could be integrated into the fascist past, because of its nationalism, its totalitarianism, and its cult of the strong state. But

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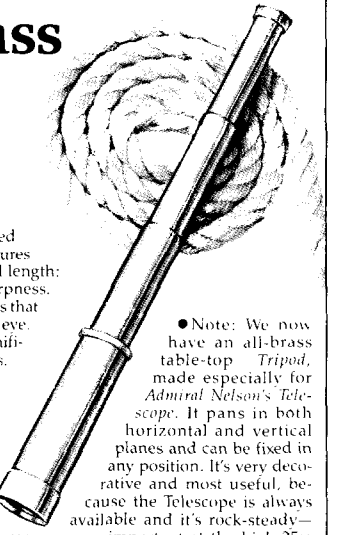

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does this mean that the French Revolution was indeed the starting point for fascism in France?

When dealing with the period between the wars, an ambiguous and contradictory period for French society, Sternhell makes some essential points. Hostility toward liberal democracy was widespread in France in the '30s, and it was shared by segments of the French population much broader than the small group that called itself fascist. A fascist "state of mind" was an acceptable attitude, even when it was known as fascist. People (or movements) who would fight the Nazis after 1942 may have shared fascist views ten years earlier. For some, a small minority, nationalism remained more important than any social or ideological order; for others, much more significantly, the crusade against liberalism and Marxism became more important than the fate of the nation. For these latter, the true fascists, fascism was an autonomous and authentic worldview, one that could not be reduced to an exacerbated nationalism. "Where the history of ideas was concerned," Sternhell concludes, "Vichy was neither an accident nor an aberration but the logical sequel to the non-conformist attempts at renewal of the whole half century that preceded the collapse of 1940."

Sternhell trains his sights on a few select figures: Georges Valois, Henri De Man, Marcel Déat, Thierry Maulnier, and the intellectuals writing for *Combat*, among others. Both his method and his choices raise problems. Valois, for instance, was a completely marginal figure. De Man's fascism, as Aron pointed out, became apparent only in 1940, after the occupation of Belgium by the Nazis. And the case of Déat is still more complicated. Still a member of the Socialist Party in 1930, he published in *Perspectives socialistes* a famous article entitled "Le socialisme spiritualiste," which protested the absence of moral and spiritual considerations in Marxism. The rebellion started with this article eventually led to a schism within the ranks of the Socialist Party in November 1933, and to the founding of Déat's own Parti Socialiste de France. The "neo-socialists" supported the struggle of "all the agents of production against all the profiteers," and no longer of the industrial proletariat against the bourgeoisie.

Such quotations (and there are many of them) may indeed create the impression that there was a basic similarity between the anti-materialist and national revision of socialism in the '30s and that proposed in the previous generation by Sorel, Berth, and their companions. But a closer look at Déat's positions during those years shows that, in their ideological and political context, they can be interpreted quite differently. In fact, the themes that Sternhell identifies in *Perspectives socialistes* are common to various political groups of the time, from the left to the right, and some of these themes were used even by the right wing of the Communist Party after 1934. In Germany, for instance, Rudolf Hilferding, one of the leading figures of the Socialist Party and one of the main targets of the right, called for the transformation of socialism from a class movement to a popular movement, a *Volkspartei*, that would include the middle classes. Moreover, Déat's *Perspectives socialistes* article ends with a utopian vision of a world forever at peace, organized on the basis of a fed-

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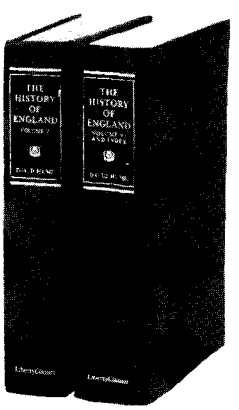

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> The old human quarrels will not develop in a civilization so strongly based on solidarity. And, moreover, the time of fanaticism is passed: the fanaticism of power, of profit, of ownership. National fanaticism too, that of race, of culture, of language or of color.

So Déat wrote in 1930. It is hardly a vision that fits the fascist fantasy. Between 1933 and 1935, to be sure, Déat's positions became clearly tainted with fascist ideas, though he continued to back the existing system and to work within it; but from 1935 until the defeat of France, Déat's fascist utterances by and large disappeared: he remained a systematic "appeaser" in relation to Nazi Germany, because of a pacifism he shared with many. It was only after the defeat that Déat's fascism unfolded in its full scope. For Sternhell, what happened after 1940 seems to be sufficient proof of what happened before; for others, it may not be.

STILL, THE storm aroused by Sternhell's book concerned not the men who were to become true fascists and collaborators, such as De Man and Déat, but the so-called fascist "impregnation," which involved those who formed the outer fringe, the periphery of French fascism. Bertrand de Jouvenel is included in this group, and so are Raymond Aron, Arnaud Dandieu, Emmanuel Mounier, and many others. Even Hubert Beuve-Méry, the future founder of *Le Monde*, makes a brief appearance. Jouvenel's case drew the most attention because of his lawsuit against Sternhell. But Sternhell's most controversial claim is about Mounier, the important theological thinker and exponent of "personalism," influential founder of the left-wing Catholic periodical *Esprit*, and one of the spiritual mentors of the "nonconformist" elite of France from the '30s to the '50s.

Sternhell documents Mounier's obsession with decadence, his opposition to party politics on the grounds that it corrupts spiritually, his rejection of the republican system, his anti-liberalism, anti-capitalism, and anti-Marxism—in sum, his rejection of "materialism." He adduces a wide array of quotations to bolster the case against Mounier. Among these is an interview Mounier gave on October 25, 1940, to the American Catholic periodical *Commonweal*. It is entitled "Letter from France: A Personalist Leader, Editor of *Esprit*, Sends This Message to America from France." Here are some telling excerpts:

> The first step to take is to place oneself on the scale of vision of the man who at this moment has taken the initiative in the history of Europe. Herr Hitler on several occasions has declared that he envisions his policies on the scale of a thousand years. The "realists" smile. But on reflection this perspective would seem a bit narrow.
>
> A few young Frenchmen for a long time have been saying this in vain to their own country: the war that shakes Europe to its foundation is not imperialist but revolutionary. Europe divided against itself is giving birth to a new order, not only perhaps for Europe but for the whole world. Only a spiritual revolution and an institutional rebirth of the same scope as the fascist revolution could perhaps have saved France from destruction. The totalitarian countries present a frenzied image of the outlines of a civilization in which we will have to discover, after them and better than they have discovered, the profound essence.
>
> Germany versus the West is Sparta versus Athens, the hard life versus the pleasant life.

And Mounier's writings of the '30s are no lovelier.

Was a man like Mounier, then, a fascist? In the case of Mounier, and of the theology of personalism more generally (an influence that shows up in the work of a writer as far away from all these ideas as Simone Weil), the traits common with fascism are indisputable. But again, there were fundamental differences. Fascism's emphasis on irrationalism, power, and nationalism stands in sharp contrast to the high value the personalists placed on dignity and freedom and on the individual as the basis for the community. In an interesting review of Sternhell's book, Michel Winock, author of a political history of *Esprit*, reminds us that, notwithstanding Mounier's hostility to bourgeois democracy and to radical-socialist parliamentarianism, *Esprit* was on the side of the victims in the Abyssinian conflict, and in the Spanish Civil War, and in the new state of Nazi Germany—all this at a time of growing xenophobia and anti-Semitism. Indeed, *Esprit* was banned in July 1941 by the Pétain regime, and its editor was arrested by the Vichy police.

THE DEBATE about Mounier can serve as a model case in the problem of historical objectivity. What Mounier's defenders consider major, Sternhell considers minor, and vice versa. For Sternhell, Mounier's attacks on liberal democ-

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racy are the main point. According to Sternhell, although Mounier deplored the defeat of France, he regarded Munich as the "salutary wound" he had awaited for six years, and he hoped that the fall of liberal democracy would make possible the birth of a new world. For Winock, on the other hand, Mounier's adherence to Vichy was simply a "faux pas," a "miscalculation." Winock stresses that *Esprit* was closed in August 1941; Sternhell points out that Mounier requested and received authorization to publish *Esprit* in the fall of 1940 six days after the promulgation of the Vichy Statute of the Jews.

It is interesting that the most difficult subject of all, the anti-Semitic current in French society of the '30s, did not figure in the controversy over Sternhell's book. Indeed, anti-Semitism plays a decidedly minor role in *Neither Right nor Left*, although it is a central preoccupation of Sternhell's previous work. Although the radical right of the late 19th century, as well as part of the dissident left, was deeply anti-Semitic, and although anti-Semitism figures importantly in the ideas of the pre-World War I "fascists," Sternhell fails to include it in his tidy definition of fascist doctrine—probably because of its absence in Italy. The "fascist impregnation" of France in the '30s was carried out by men like Déat and De Man, who were not anti-Semitic in the least. For every Drieu La Rochelle or Brasillach, who were anti-Semites and fascists, there was a Doriot, who was a fascist but not an anti-Semite; a Bernanos, who was fiercely anti-Semitic and just as fiercely anti-fascist; a Giraudoux, who became director general of information in Daladier's government and who wrote in *Pleins Pouvoirs* some of the most vicious anti-Semitic lines of the time; and a Céline, the most rabid Jew-hater of all.

THERE IS no end, in sum, to the contradictions. And this returns us to the really critical question: What *was* the scope of fascism in France? Any student of the '30s knows that in most Western European countries an indeterminate zone of ideological unrest existed in which liberalism was systematically rejected in the name of a wide variety of ideas and values, some of which were fascist. The borders of this zone cannot be defined, and the most diverse types of "non-conformism" can be found within it. In Germany, for instance, there were Moeller van den Bruck, Ernst Jünger, Oswald Spengler, Ernst Niekisch and his "National Bolshevism," the "Tat" group with Hans Zehrer and Ferdinand Fried, as well as some Nazi non-conformists ousted from the party at various stages.

The same anti-liberal zone, more fluid perhaps, existed in France. Can it be equated with fascism? Sternhell's argument has some merit. Raoul Girardet, one of the outstanding specialists on French fascism, expressed a somewhat similar thesis in the '50s, when he spoke of "diffuse fascism." And even more telling, though unremarked by Sternhell, are testimonies from the early '30s, such as the letter by the writer Jean Guéhenno to Romain Rolland, which refers to the various non-conformist themes in 1932 and declares that "the intellectual program of fascism is there in its totality."

THIS SAID, the confusing fact remains that while all fascists were anti-liberals and anti-Marxists, not all anti-liberals and anti-Marxists were fascists. Had Sternhell stressed the radical break between the prewar and the postwar European scene, had he given a central place to the traumatic impact of the war, to the Bolshevik Revolution and the widespread chaos of the immediate postwar years—with the accompanying fear of revolution shared by the middle classes and the traditional elites alike—he could have established a clearer distinction between anti-liberalism and anti-Marxism on the one hand and fascism on the other. Anti-liberals and anti-Marxists of all possible hues were looking for solutions to what they considered the final crisis of Western liberal society. They advocated pulling down what had to fall; they looked for various syntheses between right and left, between individualism and a new sense of community, between capitalism and a planned economy, between secularism and spiritualism, between nationalism and dreams of pan-Europeanism. But there is a difference between all these positions and fascism strictly speaking.

Fascism in its significant historical context—that is, in its post-World War I context—did not aim at a synthesis between a new right and a new left. Whatever its social program may have been, whatever the origins of some of its leaders, fascism was a doctrine and a movement of the "revolutionary right," with various additional national ingredients. Theory cannot be separated from practice. Even if someone like Doriot was a product of communism, his Parti Populaire Français was first and foremost an anti-Marxist organization, belonging on the ideological map to an area clearly occupied by the radical right. Or, to put the issue in even clearer terms: as far as political action was concerned, fascist parties established, or could establish, a united front only with other right-wing formations. They could not belong to some kind of popular front. This was not true for many of the intellectuals who searched for non-conformist solutions of the "third way" type. And that is the real difference between fascism and the many contemporary brands of non-conformism.

THE SCHOLAR today cannot work on the 1930s as though he were dealing with a decade of the 15th century. The history of fascism and Nazism (and of Stalinism too) cannot exclude the personal involvement of the historian. There will always be a measure of subjectivity. And there will be the matter of sensitivity to the experience of those movements as well: political ideologies like fascism, Nazism, and Stalinism impose linguistic conventions on those who wish to express even the faintest criticism, and those conventions cannot be taken at face value. At the same time, there are certain stylistic devices—key metaphors, emphases, repetitions—that encode specific messages, which, had Sternhell put as much emphasis on the style of the texts he examines as on their content, might have provided him with even more damning evidence.

It may be that historians who work on their own past, on the past of their own party or people—and under the shadow of the most chilling events of the century—are more hampered than outsiders are. As the Canadian historian John Hellman has pointed out, the most significant histories of French fascism have been done by foreigners: Richard Griffiths on the turn-of-the-century Catholic literary revival; Eugen Weber on the Action Française; Robert Soucy on Barrès and Drieu La Rochelle; Pierre de Senarclens on *Esprit*; W. R. Tucker on Brasillach; Robert Paxton and W. D. Hall on Vichy. Now we must add Sternhell to the distinguished list. Indeed, the timidity and self-restraint of a generation of French historians writing on this sinister and sensitive subject is only further confirmation of Sternhell's thesis about the remarkable extent of the "fascist impregnation" in France's intellectual, educational, and political life.

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To be sure, French historians are catching up on the controversial issues of recent French history. Sternhell's book, its flaws notwithstanding, will contribute further to the overcoming of their resistance—rather in the manner of *The Sorrow and the Pity*, Marcel Ophuls's film of some years ago about collaboration and resistance in the city of Clermont-Ferrand in Vichy France. There were mistakes in Ophuls's film, and unwarranted generalizations, but it performed an important service. It encouraged the interest in the truth, however unpleasant. There are mistakes in *Neither Right nor Left* as well. Sternhell is too taken with an ideal-type definition of fascism, a model too abstract, too neat, too detached from the shifting realities of France between the wars. Perhaps it was moral outrage that made him conflate some of the most repulsive aspects of the French political and intellectual scene of the '30s with fascism; many of us would be tempted to make the same identification. But the immense documentation he has collected, the force of his argument, the audacity and the sweep of his project, the courage with which he has thrown light upon some of the darkest regions of the French past—all this is an important step in a reappraisal without which the historical consciousness of France may not be able to face this past in its full import, and overcome it.

SAUL FRIEDLÄNDER

Saul Friedländer is the author most recently of *Reflections on Nazism: An Essay on Death and Kitsch* (Harper & Row).

RIGHT AT THE TOP

The Rise of the Counter-Establishment: From Conservative Ideology to Political Power by Sidney Blumenthal

(Times Books, 369 pp., $19.95)

A shift to the right in American politics has been clearly visible since the combined Nixon-Wallace vote of 1968. Had Watergate not intervened, we would now be in the midst of two solid decades of increasingly right-wing Republican presidencies, propelled by massive desertions from the New Deal coalition. The Democrats have a chance to recapture the presidency in 1988, provided they restrain their suicidal tendencies and nominate a candidate who can effectively do battle in the South and the West. Their victory would not in itself be likely to reverse the shift to the right, but it might perform the invaluable service of bringing it under control, something a certain kind of Republican victory might also do.

This deep shift should not be confused with formal party politics. The parties are losing their institutional power, and are becoming vehicles for essentially anti-party social movements. And the miscalled conservative movement has undermined the Republican Party even more thoroughly than the radical New Politics movement has undermined the Democratic Party. I say "miscalled" because much of the right-wing coalition is radical, and not philosophically or temperamentally conservative in any meaningful sense.

We have had useful books on this political upheaval, most notably from the gifted Kevin Phillips, but we have not had an intellectually first-rate effort from someone on the left who could combine a judicious account with criticism of a kind that could arm the conservative movement's adversaries. Sidney Blumenthal, an able and well-informed political journalist with a richly deserved national reputation, would seem a likely candidate. In *The Rise of the Counter-Establishment* he makes an effort to do a vital part of the job by analyzing the emergence and the performance of the intellectual elite that has largely set the movement's agenda and formulated policy for the Reagan administration. Blumenthal's talent and knowledge are in evidence throughout his book, which sparkles with insight. Its most valuable feature is an informative account of the right's powerful and lushly funded network of think tanks, cadre training programs, publications, and related organs of policy-making and ideological dissemination.

But alas, despite this account and other fine pieces scattered throughout, Blumenthal has written a poor book. Yet its shortcomings may prove instructive. When a writer of Blumenthal's stature resorts to padding, and to cheap shots, he has probably not taken the measure of his subject. It is not a lack of skill or understanding that weakens Blumenthal's book, but the kind of political superciliousness that has typically led liberals and leftists to underestimate their adversaries, and that today leads them to underestimate the depth and extent of the turn to the right.

Thus much of the book is given over to gossip and trivia. I was delighted to learn that Irving Kristol's favorite restaurant is the Italian Pavilion; trusting Kristol's taste in pasta and veal, I shall try it myself when next in New York. I was not delighted to learn that "[Jude] Wanniski's personal interview with [Paul] McCracken and [William] Baroody took place over a breakfast of bacon and eggs at Washington's Madison Hotel." In place of a careful dissection of Milton Friedman's thought, we get more unilluminating personal data and superficial criticism that (rudeness and incivility aside) neither do justice to a formidable man nor prepare his opponents to do battle with his ideas. The book is brimming with such pettiness, punctuated by imprecise references to Calhoun, Burke, Ibn Khaldun, Adam Smith, and others. Blumenthal has written carelessly, as if those he is writing about, past and present, were unworthy of his best effort.

The low point comes in a long assault on Norman Podhoretz. Whether Podhoretz deserves to be pilloried for bad manners, a foul mouth, and a generally obnoxious personality, I do not know. But nothing would be acceptable as an excuse for the shameless story that Blumenthal feels compelled to tell about Podhoretz's lunch with George McGovern "at a French restaurant," where McGovern gratuitously insulted Midge Decter (Podhoretz's wife) in a manner that expressed contempt for her in particular and for women in general, and then had the bad taste to "recall the incident with embarrassed regret and a laugh." Blumenthal lamely claims that the episode helps explain Podhoretz's intense hostility toward McGovern and

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"McGovernism." But could anyone familiar with the political course of Podhoretz and his circle believe for a moment that a personal affront, no matter how vile, would have changed anything of importance? I find it hard not to conclude that the only reason for including the wretched tale was to wound the Podhoretzes personally, and in a way nobody deserves. In only one respect does the incident reduce Podhoretz, at least in my eyes: I cannot understand his failure to crack the nearest wine bottle across McGovern's head.

THROUGHOUT the book we are treated to tedious and largely pointless biographical sketches. I intend no disrespect to the subjects of these sketches, but I have never understood the penchant of intellectuals—especially professors, journalists, and other small winners—for thinking that each other's private lives (and therefore their own) are worthy of public notice. The excuse for many of the biographical excursions is that the neoconservatives (Kristol, Podhoretz, Decter, and the others), and even some of the more traditional conservatives, have come out of the left, especially (as one might expect) the Trotskyist left. That the neoconservatives have carried their habits of ultraleft sectarianism, methods of ideological struggle, and "anti-Stalinist" fanaticism into the conservative movement is well known. To be sure, it deserves reiteration. But Blumenthal, who makes many keen observations about these matters, belabors them, leaving the impression that the "Counter-Establishment" as a whole, and much of the right-wing movement, can best be understood in such terms.

Blumenthal writes as if the neoconservatives and their Counter-Establishment allies will not last as a formidable force, and can therefore be treated gaily. He does advance good reasons, in a more serious vein, for believing that the neoconservatives cannot reproduce themselves. But by some magic along the way he makes it appear that their demise, and the demise of the supply-siders, will mark the end of the right-wing movement itself. A more dangerous folly would be hard to imagine.

Blumenthal begins his book with a clear statement of purpose:

> My aim is to advance the argument that ideas themselves have become a salient aspect of contemporary politics; that a conservative New Class, fortified within the battlements of the Counter-Establishment, has institutionalized a particular mode of ideological politics; that because of this the conservatives have determined much of the tenor of the 1980s; and that a principal consequence of the Counter-Establishment's rise has been a realignment of elites, not the much-heralded conventional realignment of the electorate.

He shrewdly assesses the emergence of an intellectual elite tied to the aggressive new entrepreneurs of the Sun Belt, and the conflicts between that elite and the older one tied to the ostensibly more socially responsible corporations of the Eastern Establishment. He does, that is, provide valuable commentary on the shifting loyalties within new and old elites, and on the consequences of the rise of a "new class" of technocrats and policy-makers. And as the author of *The Permanent Campaign*, a very useful book, he does not get trapped into reading current affairs merely as a shift in the electorate's party loyalties.

BUT HOW FAR can such hypotheses be pushed? For example, "shadow liberalism" ranks high among Blumenthal's themes. He appears to mean that the right, which he defines narrowly, is trapped in essentially liberal modes of thought, but reacts largely against the policies of liberal politicians. He may have a point about the lingering influence of liberalism on certain individuals, but I fail to find consolation in the notion that an aggressive, powerful, dangerous national movement is not really new and not really conservative. And if the right remains in power long enough, or if the liberals return to power with basically right-wing policies, the liberals may well, in good time, be ridiculed for "shadow conservatism."

More important, are we to believe that these elites, these think-tank policy advisers and their corporate patrons, are working in a manner abstracted from changes in popular politics and culture? At bottom Blumenthal does not take the right seriously as a broad-based political movement. In particular, he underestimates both the awakening of long dormant "populist" elements drawn to the fundamentalists and the quite anti-intellectual "New Right" associated with Richard Viguerie, Paul Weyrich, and Howard Phillips. Consequently, he views the expected inability of the neoconservatives and supply-siders to reshape the economy as the heart of the story.

For Blumenthal, the story will have a happy ending. He concludes his book:

> Will an unaltered conservative ideology be enough to protract endless "golden years"? Perhaps. But nothing would reconfirm the ideology for conservatives more convincingly than defeat. Then they would be swept back to their shadow liberalism. In their Counter-Establishment redoubt, they would return to the opposition, where they began, secure once again in the tenets of their faith. There they could contemplate the next cycle of history and await another chance for Restoration.

Blumenthal does not consider the possibility that the defeat of this right may well bring forward a much harder and more radical right. This harder right is sometimes mistakenly identified with the left-wing politics of the counterculture. Ordinary Americans who saw the counterculture as an Establishment product telescoped too much, but they were closer to the truth than the self-proclaimed social theorists whose "critical criticism" raised the counterculture to vast revolutionary heights. In any case, the Establishment owns the counterculture today. At least some of the conservative intellectuals know very well that the dynamics of contemporary capitalism, not the "liberal media" and "permissive courts," is at issue.

As people with a tragic sense of life and a belief in the sinful fragility of humanity, these conservatives fear, as they should, that the market and consumer choice in social and cultural matters will appeal to the basest of instincts. They understand that a free society must be disciplined by selective repression. And in a world in which all secular ideologies are undergoing a crisis of legitimacy, authority, and moral obligation, they are hardly foolish, even if ultimately wrong, in insisting upon a religious grounding for social policy. In this matter they face the neoconservatives as well as the left with heavy artillery.

THE neoconservatives also invoke religious values, and at first glance they appear to take the same position. But for the most part they are not themselves believers, and God plays no discernible part in their ideology. They are therefore open to charges of bad faith or hypocrisy—a modern version of "send the women, children, and lower classes to church while we sophisticated men of property, who know that God does not exist, rule wisely in His name." And the genuine believers who have rushed to embrace the market have a few problems of their own. The New Right, for exam-

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ple, may have trouble selling Michael Novak's "theology of the corporation" in the populistic Bible Belt, not to mention the blue-collar districts that voted for Nixon, Wallace, and Reagan.

Yet the neoconservatives have had the wit to join the traditionalists in hurling Dostoyevsky's challenge at the left: If God does not exist, are not all things permitted? The left may begin by observing that we dare not profess belief in God simply because we need him to tidy our politics, and we dare not appeal to the ambiguities of the Word, which now as before are rending the churches. But does the left, in fact, have a positive statement to make? Precisely on what do we base a doctrine of moral obligation that can discipline individuals in a world in which the antagonism between self and society can be reduced but never transcended? Pat Robertson, the fundamentalist preacher who is testing (and so far rather enjoying) the presidential waters, scored heavily in a recent interview in which he observed that the left has put nothing substantial in God's place. Until we have a movement that can meet that challenge in a broadly convincing and intellectually honest and coherent way, we ought neither to be surprised nor frightened to learn that millions of good people are straining for God's grace.

These problems must be resolved if a politically viable alternative to the conservative movement is to emerge—if the liberal-left is to do more than win an election, shuffle the deck of elites, and try to muddle through, which is what it did during the long years and decades before the Reagan upheaval. Similarly, if the center-left cannot come up with an economic program other than a return to discredited New Dealism, then the collapse of Reaganomics will most likely, as Kevin Phillips and others have warned, open the floodgates to further right-wing radicalism. Blumenthal cannot be faulted for not offering solutions to these problems, though he may be faulted for trivializing them.

Enter the question of constituencies. For Blumenthal the current scene features shifting elites. He makes a good point, so far as it goes. But the Counter-Establishment, like the Liberal Establishment it has been overwhelming, can prove no stronger than the constituencies upon which it must rely. And it is the scorned traditionalists who are waiting in the wings. Here even Phillips suggests that before long the social issues will wane, as the politicians make concessions to the opponents of the counterculture and thereby defuse the extremists. In such an event, economic issues would again come center stage, especially since most of the 25 percent or so of the electorate here under discussion has historically been populist, not economically conservative.

These populist social and cultural conservatives have able spokesmen of their own. As Phillips tells us, they talk a lot about Andrew Jackson and George Wallace but not about Edmund Burke. Viguerie, Weyrich, and Howard Phillips have accomplished the extraordinary feat of forging a solid alliance between blue-collar and other socially conservative Catholics, fundamentalist Protestants, and religio-political Orthodox Jews. This constituency is a sine qua non for a mass "conservative" movement, but it is basically radical rightist, not conservative. It provides the most likely base for a rebellion against the Counter-Establishment, much as its Protestant wing has long rebelled against the Liberal Establishment. The abortion issue alone, which eludes principled compromise, may well keep it together even if prayer in the schools loses strength as an issue and gays are sent back to the closet.

THIS POPULIST right has periodically shifted leftward, especially in response to economic pressures. But there are at least two stumbling blocks in the way of those who would turn its political flank: the race question and anti-communism. On both matters we are in for a bad time. For liberals seem ready, despite pretenses, to scuttle the blacks, or at least a big majority of them, and are once again trying to outbid the right for the palm of anti-communism. Me-too politics has never much appealed to the down-home folks, who may be narrow-minded but are far from stupid. And since the blacks constitute a sizable bloc, their isolation from the Democratic Party, either by staying home or going it alone, would create a void that only problematic reverse defections from the populist right could fill. Yet in an economic slump the liberals might well attract populist right-wing support by distancing themselves from the blacks. To speak bluntly, such distancing would constitute a moral catastrophe, but not necessarily a political one (at least not in the short run), for the Democratic Party and the center-left.

Anti-communism, or more accurately anti-Sovietism, and an aggressive foreign policy pose greater difficulties, for nothing so tightly binds the right together. The potential of anti-Sovietism,

A Critical Age

So that's what it's like to stand helpless at the phone,
Glasses cracked in snowflake patterns, and Information telling you
The vital numbers are unlisted. So that's what it's like
To realize you will never know what goes on behind
Closed doors, the grunts and creaking prying through the cracks,
Realize you can only know what you yourself already know.
So that's what it's like to lie helpless, feeling stars of pain in
Your left side, the side you abandoned though they warned you.
So that's what it's like to win those prizes you once believed
Would provide the necessary ballast, and realize Moses
Had to find the tablets, could not tell water from stone
Within himself. Within himself, he seized on what he could,
Conviction somehow there long enough to part the Sea, the waves
Of doubt. So that's what it's like to see a clear path ahead for
A moment and to know that certainty for long is like convict labor.
So that's what it's like to become weightier, as if it would keep you
Where you need to be, would provide the necessary provender.
So that's what it's like to become lighter, translucent
As a metaphor of air, to hear the music of the spheres: forte / piano,
Piano / forte—Mozart, as if on the spinet in the next room,
The windows open to those fields of particulate color.
So that's what it's like, like nothing really, beyond compare.

CYNTHIA MACDONALD

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well mixed with a ferocious jingoism, exploded over the Panama Canal treaty, which Blumenthal also slights but which the New Right used to enlist hundreds of thousands and perhaps millions of supporters.

Blumenthal offers promising but ultimately frustrating discussions of foreign policy. He does an admirable job on the neoconservatives' obsession with anticommunism and the "culture of appeasement," on the mischievous but influential Committee on the Present Danger, on Star Wars, on the dangerous irrationality of Ronald Reagan's anti-Soviet demonology. But he does not tell us how the liberals' view of the Soviet Union differs in essentials from that of the right-wingers. Nor does he frankly argue for accepting the reality of having to live with an Evil Empire out of fear of nuclear extinction. If, however, the Soviet Union stands condemned as the right condemns it—if it is the aggressive, expansionist, totalitarian nightmare that liberals, at least when it suits them, also insist upon—then the hard line of the right, in substance if not always in detail, makes sense, and demonstrates elementary moral courage and concern. And those on the left who would retort that imperialism is worse than totalitarianism might recall that their predecessors of the 1930s ended up eating their words.

IT WOULD take a while to re-educate the American people about the political realities of the nuclear age, in which the capitalist and communist systems are in discrete but interlocking crises. A new coalition of liberals and leftists—what other hope do we have?—will need to bury the false dichotomy between hards and softs in foreign and defense policy. A strong national defense coordinated with a willingness to negotiate a modus vivendi with a rival nation-state constitutes the only policy that can challenge the right fundamentally. But such a policy implies acceptance of the legitimacy of communist countries and a refusal to transform ideological differences into national-state ones. Americans, who retain a great deal of healthy idealism, must be convinced that they can coexist peacefully with socialist countries without dishonoring themselves.

To do that, a new center-left coalition will have to sort out the social and cultural issues carefully and establish its own credentials as guardian of a moral order. The ERA is one thing, gay liberation another. Vigilance for constitutional liberties is one thing, toleration of pornography, drugs, and hooliganism another. Separation of church and state is one thing, a refusal to accommodate the inoffensive aspirations of a great majority of Americans for a religious presence in leading institutions another. The Democratic Party, or, if the party system disintegrates, a coalition of parties that approximates it, remains the only viable instrument in times too dangerous for high rolling. The Democratic Party cannot win without carrying a substantial part of the South and the West, but if it wins without being able to reverse the deep undercurrent in our national life—if it merely reshuffles the elites that absorb Blumenthal's attention—we shall have gained nothing, and we shall have prepared the way for a confrontation with an immeasurably more unattractive right than anything we have yet seen.

EUGENE GENOVESE

Eugene Genovese is Distinguished Professor of Arts and Sciences at the University of Rochester and the author, with Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, of *Fruits of Merchant Capital: Slavery and Bourgeois Property in the Rise and Expansion of Capitalism* (Oxford University Press).

FORMAL MEASURES

Obbligati: Essays in Criticism by Anthony Hecht

(Atheneum, 330 pp., $18.95)

When Richard Wilbur's last book of poems, *The Mind-Reader*, appeared ten years ago, it was in some quarters damned (with a bit of faint praise), its author accused of repeating himself, of unapologetically writing formal verse that lacked deep feeling (this was the post-late '60s, remember), of being—in a word—Parnassian. In striking contrast to these charges was a handsome review of the book in the *Times Literary Supplement* by Anthony Hecht, who castigated "this poetic era of arrogant narcissism—when great, shaggy herds of poets write only about themselves, or about the casual workings of their rather tedious minds." Those to whom "formal" poetry such as Wilbur's was unnatural and therefore insincere were in fact exhibiting "a crippled response to life and language," even as they paid allegiance to what Hecht called, scornfully, "the name of directness, of authenticity, of courage, of any number of Rousseauian virtues that belong exclusively to the underbred and ill-educated."

This was strong stuff, and I remember feeling exhilarated by it: just the medicine needed for those zombie deep-image poets who couldn't rhyme if their lives depended on it. The piece on Wilbur is the shortest of ten essays in Hecht's first prose collection, and it begins with a list of Wilbur's virtues, the first of which is his "superb ear . . . for stately measure, cadences of a slow, processional grandeur, and rich ceremonial orchestration." It is an absolutely just thing to remark about Wilbur (Hecht thinks he has the finest ear for such cadences of any poet now writing in English). But it is also appropriate to describe the manner of address and compositional style of these essays.

Hecht's subject is always poetry: the first and final essays, "The Pathetic Fallacy" and "Houses as Metaphors: The Poetry of Architecture," are really illustrated rambles around a theme, and they frame the other essays, mostly about modern poets or Shakespeare: Wilbur, Robert Lowell, Elizabeth Bishop, and Auden's "In Praise of Limestone"; *Othello* and—in the longest of them, almost a hundred pages—*The Merchant of Venice*. An essay titled "The Riddles of Emily Dickinson" and one on Marvell and Keats complete the group. Hecht calls them "essays in criticism" and they are indeed that, although a particular kind of critical operation that has little interest in certain other kinds. For example, he is not an evaluative critic, concerned to grade writers against each other or within their individual oeuvres. Whatever theoretical interests he sometimes

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shows are wholly subordinate to his dealings with particular texts—indeed he is perfectly comfortable speaking about poems and plays, rather than "texts," which means he is over the age of 40. He expresses no concern to "open up the canon." Rather, he is interested in appreciating more discriminately—and at length—various instances of that canon. And unlike some poet-critics such as Yvor Winters or Robert Graves, he is not occupied with making a case through his criticism for a certain style of poetry as opposed to other styles. (He is to be sure on the side of intelligence, wit, elegance of form, complexity of feeling.)

THE BOOK'S preface alerts us to the double sense of "obbligati" as obligations to poets and their works, and to the editors and institutions who invited the author to write or deliver essays about those poets. But Hecht is also affirming "the proper role of criticism as a musical obbligato" that strives to move in harmony with its subject, and that remains always subordinate to the text on which it's commenting. Like other writers of prefaces, he is pleased to find "an unexpected coherence" in the collection; this coherence, he insists, was not planned, and he leaves it for his readers to elucidate. I shall make a stab at identifying the coherence, which seems to me no more nor less than the presence, in each essay, of a literary mind so well stocked that to write about a particular artist or work of art is almost immediately to be put in mind of another artist or work in terms of which the original one may be considered.

In other words Hecht's practice is a lively example of what Frost called "Education by Poetry," of "saying one thing in terms of another." So before setting out to comment on Auden's "In Praise of Limestone," Hecht quotes at some length (he proceeds at leisure in most of these essays) sentences from a delightful section of Montesquieu's *Esprit des Lois* titled "Of Laws in Relation to the Nature of the Climate." In remarking on the nimbleness and agility with which Wilbur translates outward physical action into an imaginative condition, he is moved to quote two unidentified stanzas from Tennyson (they are from "A Dream of Fair Women" and are seldom quoted), then goes on to point out that the two poets "share an unparalleled musical ear and an enormous sense of physical vitality." But now, having quoted the Tennyson lines, their "huge energy" reminds him of Delacroix, indeed of a particular painting, *The Massacre of Chios*. Only by the end of the paragraph is he led back to the Wilbur poem, "On the Marginal Way," that he first mentioned a page before. The most ambitious, even relentless saying of things in terms of other things occurs in "The Pathetic Fallacy," where among others Ruskin, the *Iliad*, D. H. Lawrence, Pope, Shakespeare, Hardy, T. S. Eliot, W. C. Williams, Ortega, Meyer Schapiro, "The Snow Man," Frost, George Steiner, Roland Barthes, W. K. Wimsatt, Werner Heisenberg, and, yes, Richard Wilbur come on stage to make their contributions to the conversation.

IN MORE pompous writers (such as the above-mentioned George Steiner) this shuttling from one example to another could prove less than tolerable. I think the reason that in Hecht's writing it is invigorating and edifying, rather than mere fancy footwork, has everything to do with one of his obligations: to move in "intellectual counterpoint" with his subject rather than overwhelming it with "brilliant" writing. To this end his manners toward the work of art are of a piece with his manners toward the reader. He holds with R. P. Blackmur's matchless formulation that criticism is the formal discourse of an amateur (an amateur is somebody who loves something, like a poem), and his working notion is that the reader may be courteously but firmly led—without the critic employing arcane vocabulary or an overbearing tone—to see the work of art more clearly. In the earliest of the essays printed here, Hecht begins his comparison of Marvell's "The Garden" and Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale" this way:

> Each is a private meditation of the poet, alone and in a natural setting; in both cases, as a consequence of an extraordinary and superior passivity, an exquisite secular and sensuous ecstasy is experienced; in both cases this ecstasy seems like the departure of the soul from the body, and like an inkling of a blissful death; and in both cases the return to the natural setting, the "real world," at the end of the ecstasy is accompanied by an intimation that perhaps only the ecstasy itself was real, and that while ecstasy had been identified with death at the highest moment of its experience, it might rather be the most intense sense of life, whereas the return to the transitory world might be a return to dying and to death.

No fireworks here, but the most careful, patient drawing out of the shared dramatic sequence exhibited in two great poems, juxtaposed the better to see them individually. The critic's voice is, in the best sense, a leading one.

The two fullest interpretations in the book are of Shakespeare (the one on *The Merchant of Venice* is subtitled "A Venture in Hermeneutics") and they cannot be summarized nor dealt with in detail here. To use Hecht's term for Wilbur's style, both essays are richly orchestrated, and both try to see the plays in their largest social and religious context. At the beginning of the *Merchant* essay he apologizes for paying too little attention to the play's language, concerned as he is with concentrating on its "hidden architecture," and it does seem to me that a price was paid for such concentration. For example, one of the questions he asks is why Portia is so clever, how she manages so masterfully to put things to rights when the Duke and his legal forces have been stymied by Shylock's design. The answer Hecht gives is an elaborately thematic, architectural one: "Portia's triumph is hermeneutical: a revelatory and inarguable reading of the text of 'the law,' a reading made possible by her virtue, understanding, and faith." I suppose so, but what about saying that Portia is clever because Shakespeare wanted her to be, and that in fact Shakespeare's language—in, say, the "quality of mercy" speech—is much more interesting and compelling than "Portia" considered as a character who possesses traits like virtue and understanding. Still, the extended treatment given the play made me think about *The Merchant of Venice* in more spacious and complicated ways than I had previously; there is nothing Hecht touches that he doesn't turn slightly more fully into the light of consciousness.

ONE FINAL example of such turning, in the essay on Lowell. It has been known, at least since Hugh Staples's 1962 book on the poet, that "The Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket" has deep affiliations with Milton's "Lycidas." In fact, as Staples pointed out, when the poem originally appeared in its unpruned form in two installments of *Partisan Review*, it turned out to have the same number of lines (193) as "Lycidas." That knowledge, which I had once taken in and forgotten, is given a fresh twist by Hecht's putting it next to Eileen Simpson's remembering (in *Poets in their Youth*) how Lowell and John Berryman would explicate and rave about Milton's poem together at breakfast before heading off to their studies. Hecht then explains why "Lycidas"

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meant so much to the author of "The Quaker Graveyard":

> Here was one of the world's indisputably great poems, a marine elegy, formidable in its overt and hidden debts to its classical predecessors, distinguished for its striking outburst of moral indignation, the superlative work of a young but limitlessly ambitious poet, who not only composes a masterpiece, but ends by announcing that he looks to even greater undertakings in "pastures new." As a model of substance, of congested and densely packed style, of concealed prophecy and covertly declared ambition, nothing could have served Lowell better.

Put this way by Hecht—saying one poem in terms of another—our sense of both poems has been enhanced and given the kind of permanence it had not hitherto possessed, which is the most valuable gift the poet-critic, or any critic, can hand along to us.

WILLIAM H. PRITCHARD

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THE OSLO FILE

The Griffin: The Greatest Untold Espionage Story of World War II
by Arnold Kramish

(Houghton Mifflin, 294 pp., $17.95)

One evening in November 1939, an unknown visitor appeared at the British legation in Oslo and handed a small parcel to the naval attaché—on behalf of a friend, as he said, quickly leaving the building and disappearing into the darkness. The package was sent on to London. Upon inspection it was found to contain a full and detailed list of most of the secret weapons then developed by the Germans—radar, rocket technology, new underwater mines, and so on.

The "Oslo report" has entered the history of World War II (and of espionage) as probably the single most important document that ever fell into the hands of any intelligence service. It was so sensational that at first little credence was given to it, if only because it seemed unlikely that any single person could have such a wide range of knowledge of secret work in progress. Some of the younger scientists were less skeptical, however, and subsequent events bore them out, for one after another the miracle weapons were introduced. Moreover, further information was sporadically received from this unexpected source, mainly via Norway but also by way of Sweden and Switzerland.

British intelligence gave this mysterious source the code name "The Griffin," but his true identity was known only to two or three people at the time. Even four decades after the end of the war, his person was still shrouded in secrecy. While the official history of British intelligence frequently mentions the Oslo report, it never mentions its author, nor does R. V. Jones in his study of scientific intelligence. Students of World War II in the West and the East have tried to solve the riddle, but their efforts have been in vain. Finally, though, after years of painstaking and fascinating historical detective work, Arnold Kramish claims to have solved the mystery—and his evidence seems to me overwhelming. The unknown informant was a scientist named Paul Rosbaud, born in Austria in 1896. He served as an officer in the First World War, was wounded, and later studied chemistry. His brother was a well-known conductor. After some years of work in industry Rosbaud became editor of the major journal in the field of metal production, adviser to major scientific publishing houses, and consultant to various government committees.

While not a scientific genius, Rosbaud was a man of great erudition and wide interests, an extrovert, on friendly terms with virtually every leading figure in physics and chemistry. It was on his ini-

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tiative that the short article about splitting the atom (by Otto Hahn) was published in Germany a few weeks before the outbreak of the war—a decision regretted by the German authorities. He was not a member of any political party and his interest in politics prior to 1933 seems to have been limited. He was in no way a fanatic. His lifestyle was that of a hedonist, to put it mildly. He had a Jewish wife whom he sent to London before the outbreak of the war; but this fact is not crucial to the rest of the story, for Rosbaud was already estranged from her by that time, and had a considerable number of women besides. Certainly he was not a spy in the usual meaning of the term. He never took a penny from the Allies. When he died in London in 1963 his estate consisted of £500 sterling, a gold watch, and the gold Tate Medal that American physicists had bestowed on him.

What were Rosbaud's motives? What made this unpolitical man betray his country and risk his life? Kramish's explanation may not be readily plausible to a generation that did not experience war and totalitarian rule. Not long ago I faced a similar problem writing the life of Edward Schulte, a German who also defied Nazi rule. There is the mistaken belief that only fanatical commitment to an alternative political or religious creed—be it that of the Communist Party or the Jehovah's Witnesses—could possibly induce a man or woman to act in this way. Yet in truth, Rosbaud, like Schulte, detested the Nazis, was convinced that Hitler would lead Germany into war, and felt that it was his duty to do all in his power to thwart Hitler's design. Both these men belonged to a generation for which principles and values counted.

Rosbaud conveyed his information to the British mostly by means of Norwegian friends. He did it so ably that the Gestapo was never even remotely aware of his activities. As a result, the curtain of anonymity was not lifted even after 1945. Secret services do not normally reveal the identities of their sources, and Rosbaud was not given to boasting.

Arnold Kramish's search for the Griffin continued for many years. As a young man Kramish worked on the Manhattan Project, and thus came to know some of the leading figures in the Allied war effort. These connections proved to be useful when almost 40 years later he had to gain access to their papers to put together the puzzling story of the Griffin.

BUT THIS is not just the biography of one fascinating character and his hitherto unknown role in the Allied war effort. It is also a study that sheds new light on the German effort to construct the atom bomb, and it will stir up much controversy, above all in Germany. For Kramish disproves the more or less official version of the story, popularized in Robert Jungk's *Brighter Than a Thousand Suns*, according to which German physicists headed by Werner Heisenberg, a man as ambitious as he was gifted, were quite capable of producing both atom and neutron bombs but decided early on to sabotage their own country's efforts to do so. According to this conventional account they tried instead to establish an international anti-nuclear front organization. Hence Heisenberg's trip to Copenhagen in the middle of the war, in an attempt to persuade Niels Bohr, the "pope of modern physics," to sponsor an initiative of this kind.

Kramish shows that the real intention of the trip was to find out precisely what rumors about the recent work done by physicists in England and America had reached Bohr. Heisenberg and his colleagues thought that the technical difficulties involved in building a bomb were, for the time being, insurmountable. He asked for a grant of 100,000 marks to build "something the size of a pineapple." Even the non-scientists understood that this was a ridiculously small sum. When Erhard Milch, an air force general, offered him a few million, Heisenberg replied that he would not know what to do with the money.

It was an honest answer, for the German physicists were not aware of, among other things, the crucial role of plutonium in the manufacture of the atom bomb. There was at the time one man in Nazi-occupied Europe who could have led them in the right direction: a professor in Oslo named Victor Goldschmidt, the founder of modern geochemistry, who was at work on a paper called "Superuranium." But Goldschmidt was a Jew. The Nazis had deprived him of his Göttingen professorship, and he was arrested in late 1942. He was also a friend of Rosbaud, who helped to get him tempo-

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rarily out of prison. A few weeks later, the Allies smuggled him to neutral Sweden and later to London. Goldschmidt's and Bohr's disappearance, at about the same time, should have alerted German intelligence. That this was by no means the case is further evidence of how far the Germans were from solving their nuclear problems.

KRAMISH ALSO shows that émigré scientists were by no means always received with open arms in England and America. Bureaucrats such as General Leslie Groves, who headed the Manhattan Project, were not in a position to judge their scientific competence, and some (albeit not many) native scientists regarded the émigrés as undesirable competitors. This changed once the nuclear project was given absolute priority. The attitude vis-à-vis Rosbaud was similar: Perhaps he was a double agent? Perhaps his information was not of great importance after all? The only ones who implicitly believed in him were his two case officers, probably because they knew him personally. His first contact was the British passport control officer in Berlin in the 1930s, Captain Francis Edward Foley, who much to the chagrin of some of his superiors stretched the regulations and helped many German Jews to escape in time. (Foley is probably the only British intelligence officer to have a forest named after him in an Israeli kibbutz.)

When the war ended, Rosbaud was still in Berlin. The Russians were interested in him—so much so that they decided to arrest him for further interrogation. But Rosbaud's British friends got him out of the Kommandatura and whisked him away to London. There he met a young British captain, also an émigré from Central Europe, named Robert Maxwell, and the two of them decided to establish a scientific publishing house—Pergamon. Rosbaud dropped out of the venture after a few years. Maxwell went on to become one of England's press lords. In 1953 Rosbaud died of leukemia and, according to his wishes, was buried at sea. There were some vague allusions to his wartime activities in one of the obituaries, but the few who knew more kept silent, and the others paid no attention.

WALTER LAQUEUR

Walter Laqueur is the author of, among other books, *World of Secrets: The Uses and Limits of Intelligence* (Basic Books).

TRB, *from page 4*

increasing anyway. A recession or higher interest rates than CBO predicts will make these figures worse. Like the peasants of Latin America, U.S. taxpayers will be sacrificing their standard of living to pay off ancient debts to wealthy creditors.

Inevitably, as in Latin America, the debt is going to become a "populist" political issue. Alexander Cockburn writes in the November 22 *Nation*: "Interest on the debt . . . is raised by taxes on the many and repaid to the few. . . . The populist way out is to urge socialization of the debt, [and] deficit spending for the common good through public housing and the like." Nice idea. Trouble is, you can't just brazenly "socialize" the debt and expect people to continue loaning you money for further deficit spending.

Or can you? In March 1984, Herbert Stein noted in the *Wall Street Journal* that even though the government had run up deficits totaling $800 billion in the postwar period, the real value of the national debt was less than in 1946. The trick, of course, was inflation. We have an advantage over Third World debtors: our debts are denominated in our own currency. So we can repudiate the debt gradually by eroding its value. And that's just what we did with the entire postwar debt through 1983.

By the end of this fiscal year, we will have run up almost another $800 billion in debt since Stein's article. This time, though, the real burden of the debt has increased by more than half. And it will continue to increase as long as inflation stays lower than the average interest rate on government bonds.

As people forget the horrors of the late 1970s, the constituency for renewed inflation is going to build among self-styled "populists" of the left and the right. Perhaps there will even be talk of outright repudiation, or—more likely—talk of payment moratoriums, "renegotiations," and other Third World techniques of partial repudiation. As such talk scares bondholders into trading their bonds at a deep discount, some statesmanlike financier such as Felix Rohatyn will propose that the government reduce its debts on the cheap by buying back its own bonds (as Mexico is now doing). One way or another, the debt we're running up now is one we will never pay back. The consequences of not paying it back, though, won't be pleasant, either.

CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 6*

North. But Korea has never been listed as a "problem debtor" by any country or lending agency. Korea pays its bills.

The police do not "regularly invade" university campuses. Whenever, armed with warrants, they have searched campuses, they have found lethal weapons hidden for demonstrations that are not "generally peaceful." Over the past three years, they have become violent—confrontations with the police over purely political issues. This has forced the government to suspend its hands-off policy toward the universities. It has every right to take these measures that are designed to preserve peace on the campuses and wider social order as well.

North is ill-informed on recent Korean developments. The administration of President Chun Doo Hwan established Korean democratization as a major goal when it took office six years ago. During the intervening period, and especially since the gains of the opposition party growing out of the 1985 general elections, it has consistently sought dialogue and compromise with the opposition.

YOUNG MO AHN
Senior Press Attache
Embassy of Korea
Washington, D.C.

GOOD FOR THE GANDER

To the editors:

Congratulations on your "Sauce for the Gander" comment (November 10). You were quite correct in asserting that taxpayers ought not to be required to subsidize political or ideological advocacy any more than they should be forced to support cultural or religious advocacy. In 1777 Thomas Jefferson said: "To compel a man to furnish funds for the propagation of ideas he disbelieves and abhors is sinful and tyrannical."

Now that TNR is committed to an end to taxpayer-subsidized advocacy, I hope you will join the Conservative Caucus in supporting the elimination of federal subsidies to the Legal Services Corporation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for Democracy, the Public Broadcasting Service, and the full range of other organizations, at home and abroad, that promote private ideas at public expense.

HOWARD PHILLIPS
Chairman, The Conservative Caucus
Vienna, Virginia

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

The Other Me

MY FORMER BOSS, Charles Peters of the *Washington Monthly*, says that your name is your destiny. When he first saw the name Winston Lord, an assistant to Henry Kissinger on the National Security Council, he predicted that someday Lord would head the Council on Foreign Relations. It came to pass. (Lord has since become ambassador to China, which further proves the point.) Similarly, Kingman Brewster's ascent to president of Yale, ambassador to the court of St. James, and, most recently, master of University College at Oxford seems predetermined by a beautifully cadenced name. NASA-watchers took delight in the fact that the first woman in space was named Sally Ride, a choice that reflected a slightly different dynamic based not on sound but on meaning. (Other examples: New York TV reporter Gabe Pressman and Judge Learned Hand.) But in spotting this example of the Major Major Major Major phenomenon (named in honor of the character in *Catch-22* who becomes a Major because his name is Major Major Major), the Sally Ride buffs deflected attention from Robert Crippen, a name clearly fated (by its crisp sound, not its meaning) to belong to an astronaut. If you were writing about the early days of NASA, wouldn't you name your astronaut-hero Robert Crippen? We were all cheated—not least, Crippen—when Walter Cronkite retired before he had the chance to pronounce it on nationwide TV.

I LIKE TO THINK my own name is worthy of some modest distinction—say, founder of a small but innovative electronics firm, or perhaps president of a struggling Midwestern college (known for having excellent departments of linguistics and geology). Others feel differently. On a quick trip to Los Angeles last summer I met a writer for the new TV show "L.A. Law." We had a pleasant poolside chat about politics, journalism, which-do-you-like-better-New-York-or-California, etc. About a week later I got a call from him asking if it was all right if he used my name for a character. Why not? Three months later the show aired, and it turned out I was a sleazy lawyer who made a brief on-screen appearance to buy some cocaine. Or so I hear; I missed the episode. Right after my character made his purchase, the cocaine dealer—a law clerk who claimed he was doing some probate work—got busted. Friends reassure me that I managed to make a clean getaway, which was a relief. Also they say I wasn't bad-looking. It wasn't clear whether I'd made partner.

OF COURSE, the Tim Noah who appeared on "L.A. Law" was just an imaginary alter ego. My real-life alter ego, a Tim Noah who lives in Seattle, is somewhat more flattering. It turns out that I am neither entrepreneur nor college president, but a children's entertainer. In 1984 my record album, *In Search of the Wow Wow Wibble Woggle Wazzle Woodle WOO!* was named a 1984 Notable Children's Recording by the American Library Association. I have received a local Emmy. My work is marked by a strong sense of social responsibility. I wrote songs for specials broadcast on KIRO-TV about child abuse ("Do You Hear the Children Weeping?") and drunk driving ("DWI: Sorry Isn't Enough"). I also wrote the musical score for an energy conservation special on KING-TV. I know all this from a résumé someone sent me. The résumé included photographs, from which I learned that I have a pleasant, if slightly gaunt appearance. (I had worried that I'd look menacing, like Mister Rogers.) I gather I'm sort of New Age-y, but that's OK. And I'm close to my family: Creed and Mary Noah (brother and sister-in-law?) provide my management. I get the feeling I'm not Jewish, but I don't have strong feelings about that one way or the other. In fact, my only serious regret is that I let Creed and Mary talk me into calling our company Noazart Productions. It certainly wasn't my idea.

DOES CHARLES WICK READ the newspapers? In a recent speech the director of the United States Information Agency said, "Our message . . . depends on credibility, and our credibility can only be sustained by truth." He then went on to denounce the Soviet Union's "planted press articles," all part of the Soviet Union's "sinister weapon" of disinformation. I couldn't agree more. But what about the Reagan administration's own disinformation campaign about Libya? According to the *New York Times*, after Wick denied that the administration intended to disseminate false information, he argued that disclosures about things like the Libya campaign show the vitality of a free press in this country. Now, let's think about that. Is Wick suggesting that the blessing of a free press is that it gives government officials license to lie? The corollary would have to be that in countries without a free press, government officials have to tell the truth. No, that can't be right.

WICK CAN BE A LITTLE HARD to follow sometimes. Hanging on my wall is the second page of a memo he wrote on February 22, 1982, obtained by a friend of a friend through the Freedom of Information Act. Item six reads: "When I get back, remind me to talk to Phyllis Kaminsky [then Wick's officer for public affairs] and see what ever happened with Tim Noah of the New Republic. I had an interview with him shortly before I left." This is followed by 11 blacked-out lines. In the two years since I received a copy of this memo, I have often wondered what those lines say. I went through a paranoid phase ("Have his car wired with explosives"). Then I figured he'd just been abusive ("I don't know why. I just didn't like the little twerp"). Mostly I have been confused. Much as I would like to believe that I demonstrate the Mike Wallace/Seymour Hersh killer instinct in every interview, deep down I know it isn't true. And my recollection of this interview is that it wasn't especially heated. In the end, the article I wrote was critical, but in 1982 most of what was written about Wick was critical (and besides, as the memo makes clear, Wick hadn't seen the article yet). After thinking about this long and hard, the only thing I can figure is that Wick didn't like the sound of my name.

TIMOTHY NOAH

Timothy Noah, a former TNR staff writer, recently joined the Washington bureau of *Newsweek*.

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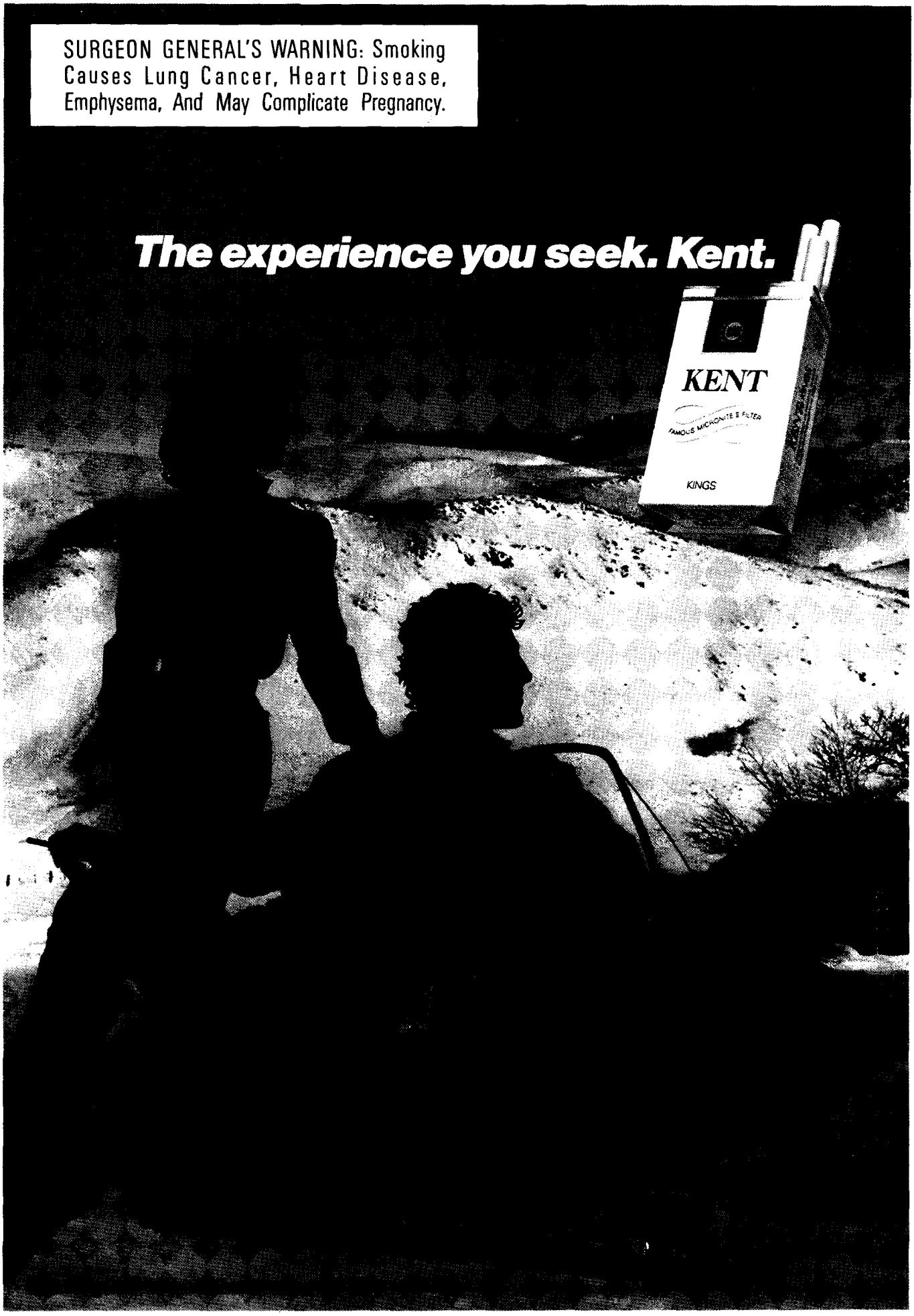
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